

**Nov. 21 – 25, 2025**

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## SESSION STATUS

At 2:36 p.m. on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, the House stands adjourned until Monday, December 15, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. for non-voting session, unless sooner recalled by the Speaker.

At 2:42 p.m. on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, the Senate recessed until Monday, December 8, 2025, at 2:30 p.m. unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore.

## UPCOMING SESSION DAYS

### House

Dec. 15 (NV), 16, 17  
Jan. 6 (NV), 26-28  
Feb. 2-4  
March 23-25  
April 13-15, 27-29  
May 4-6  
June 1-3, 8-10, 15-17, 22-30  
Sept. 28-30  
Oct. 5-7, 19-21  
Nov. 9, 10

### Senate

Dec. 8-10  
Jan. 6, 26-28  
Feb. 2-4  
March 16-18, 23-25  
April 20-22  
May 4-6  
June 1-3, 8-10, 22-26, 29-30

*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.pslgovtrac.com) users. For more information, contact [sales@mypls.com](mailto:sales@mypls.com).*

## Press Conferences

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

### GOV. SHAPIRO SIGNS CROWN ACT INTO LAW

By Zoe Buchmann, Pennsylvania Legislative Services | November 25, 2025

Gov. Josh Shapiro was joined by House Speaker Joanna McClinton (D-Philadelphia) and Rep. La'Tasha Mayes (D-Allegheny) for the ceremonial signing of [HB 439](https://legis.state.pa.us/h/leg/bills/2025/0001-0099/0001-0099_0439.htm) into law at Island Design Natural Hair Studio.

Lorraine Ruley, owner, Island Design Natural Hair Studio, noted that she felt honored to be part of the Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair (CROWN) initiative. She explained that she has owned and founded Island Design for the past 24 years, calling the experience meaningful and exciting. She said that growing up in the Virgin Islands, she had always worn natural hair and that this had been her lifelong norm. She highlighted that, once she opened her salon and began working with clients, she heard troubling stories. She detailed how clients who wore braids told her they needed to remove them for job interviews. She described one recent client who felt pressured to cut her locks because coworkers were talking about her hair, saying it did not fit workplace expectations. She said these experiences were heartbreaking. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to speak and emphasized the importance of natural hair and of wearing one's crown with pride. She acknowledged Gov. Shapiro and said he had been supportive behind the scenes. She thanked everyone for being present, noting that it was "for a perfect cause."

Gov. Shapiro expressed appreciation to Ruley and her team for welcoming the group to the west Philadelphia salon. He noted that the salon served not only as a place for beauty services but also as a community space where people connected, talked and left feeling their best. He said that helping people feel proud of who they are was meaningful work, and he was proud to support it. He added that this sense of pride should be present throughout Pennsylvania. He recalled emphasizing opportunity and real freedom in his inaugural address and said the CROWN Act was another step toward building a state that respects people regardless of appearance, background or identity. He explained that he was about to sign the CROWN Act, which bans workplace discrimination based on hair texture or hairstyle, making Pennsylvania the 28th state with such protections. He noted that hair discrimination disproportionately affects Black Pennsylvanians who wear protective styles and said such discrimination, whether direct or subtle, was unacceptable and would now be illegal. He cited recent data from the Human Relations Commission showing hundreds of complaints involving racial discrimination tied to hair. He argued that no one should have to choose between their identity and a job, saying the law would ensure Pennsylvanians are fully protected.

Gov. Shapiro credited Speaker McClinton and Rep. Mayes for their six years of work on the bill, saying it would not have happened without their leadership. He said their partnership demonstrated the power of working across different backgrounds and regions to advance opportunity. He added that more work remained to build a truly inclusive Pennsylvania and said he would continue efforts to strengthen nondiscrimination protections. He referenced Scripture about judging people by their hearts rather than outward appearance, saying the new law helped reinforce that principle in public life.

Dr. Adjoa Asamoah, CROWN Act champion, thanked the governor for recognizing that the issue extended beyond hairstyles and touched on full inclusion in the state. She introduced herself as the CROWN Act champion and scholar, saying she was overjoyed to be present for the enactment of legislation that was deeply meaningful to her, especially in the city where she grew up and near her alma mater, Temple University. She explained that she created this public policy campaign in 2018 after determining that legal change was necessary to address racial discrimination expressed through hair discrimination. She said she developed the national legislative strategy, social-impact framework and coalition-building approach that has shaped the movement. She argued that Eurocentric beauty standards and narrow definitions of professionalism had long perpetuated inequity and exclusion. She said that Black children had been suspended and lost valuable instructional time because their natural hairstyles were treated as violations of school rules, and Black adults had been denied promotions, had job offers rescinded or had been fired for wearing their hair in ways aligned with their identity. She added that research showing links between chemical relaxers and health risks demonstrated that “the cost of conformity is too high.” She emphasized that although she conceptualized the campaign, she could not have advanced it alone. She credited the leadership of Sen. Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia), Speaker McClinton and Rep. Mayes, describing them as longtime partners in policy and social action. Together, she said, they had taken an important step toward reducing the psychological, physical and economic harms associated with race-based hair discrimination. She thanked Gov. Shapiro for his support and quick enactment of the bill, thanked everyone for attending, and said she would answer questions later.

Gov. Shapiro noted that the Pennsylvania House of Representatives is split by a single vote between Democrats and Republicans, meaning that every representative standing with him had effectively been a deciding vote. He said that each of them not only cast decisive votes on policy but also made the decisive choice, on the first day of the session, to elect Rep. McClinton as Speaker of the House. He emphasized the significance of both her historic position and the actions of the members who supported her election to the passage of the CROWN Act.

Speaker McClinton thanked Gov. Shapiro for his introduction and expressed appreciation to Ruley, noting that her own journey with natural hair began nine years earlier during what she initially intended to be a temporary, “heat-free” month. She explained that, at the time, she believed she needed to maintain straight hair to appear professional in court and that colleagues and clients had never seen her wear her hair naturally. She indicated that a casual comment from a neighbor ultimately encouraged her to continue wearing her hair in its natural state. She recalled that her grandmother, now deceased, had been skeptical of her decision and that her mother questioned whether the legislation would make a meaningful difference. She said the bill would ensure that employers could not judge applicants or workers based on their hair, preventing discriminatory decisions about hiring, promotion, or inclusion in professional spaces. She emphasized that her colleagues in the House made the votes necessary to move the bill forward. She contrasted her approach with previous speakers, saying she did not prioritize advancing her own legislation, but instead supported the work of members who had long championed related issues. She highlighted Rep. Mayes’s leadership, coalition-building and advocacy, noting that she significantly expanded the campaign around the CROWN Act.

Rep. Mayes opened by noting that she usually wears a hat on session days but chose not to so people could see her natural hair as it is. She said the day marked “herstory” in Pennsylvania, as natural hair would now be legally protected. She emphasized that every texture and style is valid, professional and powerful, and that people are “enough” as they are. She described growing up in West Philadelphia and called it a full-circle moment to watch Gov. Shapiro sign the CROWN Act into law in her hometown. She spoke about the personal journey that brought her to this moment, highlighting her family, her two-year-old daughter and especially her late mother, who shaped her identity and encouraged her ambition. She reflected on their shared experiences with hair and said the complexity of Black hair mirrors the broader experiences of Black women and girls in America. She described going natural in 2002, despite her mother’s concerns about professionalism and employment, and explained that the struggles they both faced helped motivate her legislative work.

Rep. Mayes recalled first introducing the Pennsylvania CROWN Act in 2023 and said the issue affects Black Pennsylvanians broadly. She said Black people have been judged, excluded or denied opportunities in workplaces, schools, sports and other institutions because of natural hair or protective styles. She stated that hair discrimination has harmed children’s confidence, workers’ dignity and access to opportunity, and that the law begins to end those harms. She credited the national CROWN Act movement and thanked Asamoah for originating the effort. She also acknowledged U.S. Rep. Summer Lee (D-PA) and Sen. Hughes for their advocacy, saying they laid important groundwork in the House and Senate. She thanked Speaker McClinton for asking her to be the bill’s prime sponsor early in her first term, expressing gratitude for the speaker’s confidence and long-standing leadership on the issue. She noted that the bill passed with bipartisan support and that the CROWN Act coalition — made up of unions, businesses and local governments — helped build momentum statewide. With the governor’s signature, she said, Pennsylvania expands civil-rights protections and affirms that everyone deserves to appear as their authentic selves. She thanked Gov. Shapiro for elevating the issue, the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, her staff and everyone who shared experiences of discrimination. She said the law will help protect her daughter and future generations, and that while the signing is a milestone, more work remains to make the state fairer and more just.

**Where do efforts stand in terms of passing this as a federal law, and are there any concerns that a federal attempt could be challenged even further, given the current presidential administration?**

Gov. Shapiro answered, "I do not care what Donald Trump says."

Asamoah explained that the bill was drafted carefully and is strong enough to withstand judicial scrutiny. She noted that it has been reintroduced in the U.S. House of Representatives, where it has passed twice, and that U.S. Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) has reintroduced companion legislation in the Senate. She said she does not expect any effective legal challenges because of the care taken in writing it. She added that the bill has bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress. She acknowledged the political climate in Washington, D.C., but said she is committed to continuing the effort until the CROWN Act becomes federal law.

**Is this part of the budget package that was passed after the stalemate in the Pennsylvania House?**

Speaker McClinton said this has been a stand-alone bill she has worked on for six years, and that she passed the baton to Rep. Mayes in 2023 as the prime sponsor. She noted that the two of them had done significant groundwork over the past two years to reach this point. She explained that the bill passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support, even though the previous speaker had told her Republican members would not vote on anything related to race. She added that when the Senate took it up, there were very few negative votes, which she described as "remarkable" bipartisan support. She emphasized that she had reminded colleagues in both parties and in both chambers that people of color live in every county in Pennsylvania and would be positively affected by this change in the law.

**How will this be enforced? Will there be a sort of hotline people can call to report discrimination?**

Rep. Mayes explained that HB 439 amends the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act so that complaints of hair discrimination will be handled in the same way as other discrimination complaints. She noted that, under the bill, hair discrimination is formally recognized as part of the protected class of race within the act. She said that individuals would be able to file complaints through the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, either by contacting the statewide office or by using one of the satellite offices located across the state.

Also in attendance were Reps. Morgan Cephas (D-Philadelphia), Darisha Parker (D-Philadelphia), Regina Young (D-Philadelphia), Gina Curry (D-Delaware) and Sen. Hughes.



**Committee News**

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

No committee news this week.

**Bullet.in.Points**

**[PDE: INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT \(IDEA\) COMMITTEE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS](#)**

The Department of Education's Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Committee announced its 2026 schedule. Meetings will be held at 2 p.m. via Microsoft Teams. Questions may be directed to Cindy Jay at [ra-edlegal@pa.gov](mailto:ra-edlegal@pa.gov). Additional information is available on the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

## Cosponsor Memos

### HCO2898 - Commissioning a study on the inter-generational impact of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School

#### Sponsor

Rep. Christopher M. Rabb (D)

#### Summary

Resolution directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to study the intergenerational impact of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School on Indigenous youth brought to Pennsylvania and to examine the complicity of state government, religious institutions, academia, philanthropic entities and the private sector in a broader campaign of cultural genocide.

#### Intro Date

11/25/2025

#### Last Action

11/25/2025 H - Cosponsor memo filed

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### HCO2901 - Providing Tuition Waivers for Native American Students

#### Sponsor

Rep. Christopher M. Rabb (D)

#### Summary

Provides for free tuition at the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities for individuals who are enrolled members of either a tribe that was originally located on the lands that are now Pennsylvania or a tribe that had members who were enrolled at the Carlisle Industrial Indian School.

#### Intro Date

11/25/2025

#### Last Action

11/25/2025 H - Introduced HB2072

## Basic Ed Bill Actions

**HB2067 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in duties and powers of boards of school directors, further providing for temporary emergency provisions.**

### Sponsor

Rep. Joe Ciresi (D)

### Summary

No summary available yet.

### Intro Date

11/24/2025

### Actions

11/24/2025 H - Introduced

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**HB2072 - An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, establishing the Tuition Waiver for Native American Students Program.**

### Sponsor

Rep. Christopher M. Rabb (D)

### Summary

No summary available yet.

### Intro Date

11/25/2025

### Actions

11/25/2025 H - Introduced

## Higher Ed Bill Actions

No Bill Actions this Week.

## Upcoming Events

### **TUESDAY – 12/09/2025**

**1:30 PM, Penn State Faculty Alliance**

*Press Conference, Main Capitol Rotunda*

## **In the News**

[11/24/2025 - Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board Bureau of Alcohol Education Receives Award from PA DUI Association](#)

[11/24/2025 - Shapiro Administration Cuts Red Tape, Announces New One-Stop-Shop for Students Preparing to Transfer Between Pennsylvania's Colleges and Universities](#)

[11/25/2025 - Takac appointed to Pennsylvania State Board of Higher Education](#)

[11/25/2025 - Shapiro Administration Secures Additional Funding for Early Intervention Workforce, Increases Access to Services for Children](#)

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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