



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Association of Pennsylvania

Line Item	Status in House Bill 218	Relationship to Counties	Impact of Funding Cut
State Sentencing Commission	Eliminated (\$1.9 million)	Time behind bars is a deterrent during the period of incarceration, but can also increase the chances of recidivism, especially for low-level, non-violent offenses. The Sentencing Commission uses data to develop sentencing guidelines that provide judges with crucial information on sentence length and options that are proven to result in successful rehabilitation for those within the criminal justice system.	The loss of the Commission will impact public safety when the lack of critical data and science is removed from the criminal justice processes. Cuts will very likely result in variations in sentencing for individuals, which will in turn impact county prisons, county probation caseloads and state prisons. Taxpayers will get poor results and pay more by eliminating the funding for this important function.
Juvenile probation	Eliminated (\$18.9 million)	The majority of this allocation is used by counties to support the costs of 1,351 juvenile probation officers across the state. To qualify for funding, counties are required to comply with state-mandated standards, such as annual training and participation in Pennsylvania’s evidence-based practices and procedures that utilize research, data collection and quality assurance practices.	This line is eliminated, despite the statutory duty in 42 Pa. C.S. 6274 to make annual grants, putting training funds for county probation staff in jeopardy. More juveniles will be placed in the criminal justice system if there are not enough staff to support probation options, even though out-of-home placements are scientifically proven to be harmful in the long run and are often the precursor for a lifetime of touches with the criminal justice system.
Adult Probation Services	Eliminated (\$16.2 million)	This allocation provides adult probation grant-in-aid, which counties utilize to support community supervision options for non-violent offenders. The line also provides statewide training for PA Board of Probation and Parole agents and county adult probation officers.	Without the less expensive option for community-based supervision, more non-violent offenders are likely to be diverted to more costly prison sentences. The Basic Training Academy for all new agents and officers as well as other agent/officer training will also be in peril if this funding is eliminated.

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Intermediate Punishment Treatment Programs	Eliminated (\$18.2 million)	Grants to counties under this program provide community alternatives for non-violent offenders by diverting these offenders from jail and incorporating drug and alcohol treatment to assist in changing behaviors.	Elimination of this line item removes alternatives that yield the best chance of offenders productively changing behaviors. The impact on counties would result in jail time for non-violent offenders, and thus increased correctional costs at the county level, while underlying addictions that are present go untreated, resulting in higher likelihood of repeated arrests and convictions.
County Court Reimbursement	Reduction (\$3.5 million)	The line provides grants to counties for each judicial position related to the courts of common pleas.	In the 1987 case <i>County of Allegheny v. Commonwealth of PA</i> , the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that a lower court system funded by the counties created an inherently unequal system of justice. To correct this constitutional violation, it ruled that the commonwealth must take over funding and administration of the lower courts; this was later reiterated in a September 2012 Supreme Court decision. Despite these rulings, this line item was already cut by \$12 million (34%) in FY 2016-2017 and additional cuts (combined with cuts for juror cost reimbursements, county trial reimbursements and senior judge reimbursements) will force a greater reliance on counties' ability to provide local revenue and steps further away from the goal of a unified and equal system of justice across the state.

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Senior Judge Reimbursement	Eliminated (\$1.4 million)	42 Pa. C.S. 1906 requires the AOPC to create a program to defray costs to counties by the rules of judicial administration for facilities and staff for senior judges assigned to the courts of common pleas. Grants administered by the AOPC are determined through the use of judicial chambers and the utilization of services of a law clerk or secretary.	The elimination of this line will require county property taxpayers to take on the burden of funding for senior judges.
Court Interpreter County Grants	Eliminated (\$1.5 million)	These grants, new in the FY 2015-2016 budget, assist counties in meeting mandates to assure access to those with limited English proficiency.	These grants are intended to enhance compliance with the mandate and does not supplant other dollars counties must commit for language interpretation; their elimination makes this a fully unfunded mandate whose cost must be borne by county property taxpayers.
Mental Health Base	Reduction (\$5 million)	The MH/ID Act requires counties to provide an array of community-based mental health services, such as community residential programs, family-based support, outpatient care, crisis intervention and mobile therapy, which are funded with federal, state and/or county matching funds.	A lack of adequate funding for county mental health services will have direct impacts by limiting the availability of community and family supports that enable individuals with mental illness to lead independent and productive lives. In addition, untreated mental illness is often the catalyst to entry into the criminal justice system, and the reason individuals continue to cycle back through the system.

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Behavioral Health Services	Reduction (\$4 million)	Behavioral Health Services funding provides funding for persons who are uninsured or underinsured with mental health and substance abuse issues so that they can access licensed treatment programs.	This funding can support treatment costs for substance-abusing individuals, critical in addressing the opioid crisis facing the commonwealth. Without proven and effective addiction recovery options that are provided commensurate with the degree of the crisis, more deaths and more family destruction will prove costly to every community in our state. The reduction is also puzzling in the face of historic overdose rates. As indicated above, a lack of adequate funding for mental health and substance abuse services will have direct impacts, including increased costs, for the criminal justice system.
Human Services Development Fund (HSDF)	Reduction (\$2 million)	The HSDF is one of the counties' most flexible funding tools that they can use to reduce costs to human services programs through preventative and self-sufficiency measures tailored to local, specific needs that can cover multiple populations including low-income adults, children, individuals with mental health, substance abuse disorders, and/or intellectual disabilities, children, and seniors.	The continued reduction in the HSDF, which saw a 10 percent decrease in FY 2012-2013 that has not been restored, will decrease the options and support needed to meet the needs of an individual in a flexible manner and at lower costs to other human services programs in the long run. Ultimately, this will impact other systems at the county level and the way in which individuals and families can be served, and create additional pressures on local property tax dollars.

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Homeless Assistance	Reduction (\$2.8 million)	The homeless assistance program provides funding to counties to offer temporary shelter to homeless individuals or to those in danger of becoming homeless. Individuals with mental health may also qualify for housing or assistance through specialized residences in certain counties.	Reduction of this line item, which also saw a 10 percent decrease in FY 2012-2013, will result in reduced payment to counties and affect the availability of safe, accessible, affordable housing needed for successful re-entry to communities from the criminal justice system and to provide supports for individuals with mental health issues, to enable families to stay together and move toward self-sufficiency, or victims of domestic violence, for example.
Local Government Commission	Eliminated (\$1.1 million)	While counties receive no direct funding for the Local Government Commission, the Commission provides valuable resources to county governments through various services, research, and specialization in local government procedures and policies that affect county governance. For instance, the Commission has been instrumental in completing a legislative draft of a full rewrite of the County Code, developed the Consolidated County Assessment Law, among other specialized projects.	Because the Commission has staffing and expertise that enable it to undertake projects beyond the scope and available time of legislative committee staff, its elimination would result in a void of services and technical expertise for counties and state government. By way of example, the Commission is now engaged in substantive updates to the CCAL that will serve as the first true reforms of the property tax assessment process, work which will fall by the wayside and take much longer to complete without the Commission's support.