

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA THE **VOICE** OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

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CCAP NAMES KYLE KOPKO NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

After a wide-ranging and comprehensive recruitment process, the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) has named Dr. Kyle Kopko its new executive director. Kopko was formerly the executive director for the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agency that represents the interests of 3.4 million rural Pennsylvanians. Kopko was also previously an associate dean and associate professor of political science at Elizabethtown College. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from The Ohio State University and his Juris Doctor & Certificate in Intellectual Property Law from the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law.

As CCAP executive director, Kopko will lead the state's premier organization representing county government, which acts as the united voice for all 67 Pennsylvania counties. CCAP provides county leaders with information and guidance related to legislation, education, media, insurance, technology and many other issues that help create and maintain crucial services for residents throughout the state.

"I am honored and humbled to lead the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. It is not a responsibility that I take lightly," Kopko said. "For more than a century, CCAP has worked tirelessly to support each of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. CCAP's efforts are critically important and benefit every resident of the Commonwealth. I could not be more excited to serve the CCAP membership and work alongside the association's talented and dedicated staff."

Kopko will begin his role as executive director in early August.

911 SURCHARGE SUNSET APPROACHING - WHAT'S NEXT?

With just under 200 days remaining until the January 31, 2026, expiration of the current 911 surcharge at \$1.95, counties are growing increasingly concerned about the lack of a clear legislative path forward. While it remains uncertain how many session days will be available between now and the deadline, counties are hopeful that a long-term solution—not just a temporary extension—will be prioritized to meet the growing needs of the Next Generation 911 (NG911) system and the counties that operate Pennsylvania's Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).

County officials are emphasizing that maintaining the status quo is not an option. As the NG911 system and technologies continue to evolve – new costs around GIS, training, cybersecurity, connectivity, multimedia communications, and interoperability of services utilized by first responders are introduced – the existing surcharge is falling short of what is necessary. Without timely legislative action, counties may be forced to shoulder an even greater share of the cost, which could have implications for county budgets and ultimately, property taxpayers.

To ensure stability and preparedness, counties are respectfully urging the General Assembly and Administration to:

1. **Increase the monthly 911 surcharge to \$2.20**, and
2. Act quickly, so counties can align planning and resources with their annual budget cycles.

A recent [report](#) from the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) further underscores the urgency of the issue. The report highlights the progress being made with NG911 and notes that continued investment is critical to supporting the system's technological upgrades, service sharing, and evolving emergency response needs. Time is of the essence – leaders in Harrisburg must come together to act now, finalize a path forward and take immediate action on a 911 surcharge increase and reauthorization that provides appropriate levels of funding for this essential system. Counties have come to a reasonable request of **\$2.20** to ensure counties can continue to properly support the emergency response system and ultimately county residents. Additional resources on the 911 funding ask, including a 911 system overview, frequently asked questions (FAQs) and more information on why **\$2.20** is the appropriate surcharge request, can be found on the [CCAP website](#).

BUDGET RECONCILIATION SIGNED INTO LAW

On July 3, the U.S House passed the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (H.R. 1), adopting the version previously approved by the Senate on July 1, without amendment. While the bill includes several provisions that support counties, it also shifts significant financial and administrative burden to state and local governments – particularly in Medicaid, SNAP, and indigent healthcare.

These cost shifts, coupled with the potential loss of key human services funding due to sequestration, pose serious fiscal and operational challenges for Pennsylvania counties. CCAP will continue working with NACo and other partners to advocate for county priorities and promote solutions that protect essential services and local budgets. For a comprehensive analysis of the budget reconciliation package, please refer to the [detailed breakdown](#) prepared by NACo.

HOUSE REMAINS IN SESSION; BUDGET IMPASSE CONTINUES

As of this writing, the state budget remains unresolved, now nearly two weeks past the constitutional deadline of June 30. Counties services – along with other state-funded

programs and initiatives – remain in a holding pattern, awaiting an agreement between the House, the Senate, and the Governor. While a complete budget agreement has yet to materialize, the past two weeks have seen the advancement of several key bills, signaling that budget-related negotiations are underway. The House has remained in session, moving forward on legislation that carries implications for county governments.

House Bill 1532, sponsored by Rep. Robert Freeman (D-Northampton), has passed the House and is now under consideration in the Senate. The bill updates the Municipalities Planning Code to give local governments greater flexibility to adopt and implement “Specific Plans” - detailed development strategies tailored to small geographic areas and aligned with local comprehensive plans. Currently limited mainly to nonresidential and multi-municipal projects, the legislation would expand eligibility to include both residential and nonresidential development and allow individual municipalities to use these plans independently, offering a more versatile tool for community planning and growth.

House Bill 1629, sponsored by Rep. Christopher Rabb (D-Philadelphia), was approved by the House Judiciary Committee and now awaits a full House vote. The bill would require public employers to implement preventive measures to protect outdoor public workers from workplace violence. It mandates the creation of a reporting system for all incidents or threats and requires employers to offer support services following any documented acts of violence. Counties oppose HB 1629.

A juvenile justice reform package also saw movement on the House floor this week.

Sponsored by Rep. Melissa Shusterman (D-Chester), the package includes:

- **House Bill 1573**, directs the Department of Human Services (DHS) to conduct a comprehensive inventory every three years of county-level programs and services that address juvenile delinquency. The legislation emphasizes expanding the use of in-home and community-based services as alternatives to institutional placements for children. Additionally, it requires DHS to develop a publicly accessible data dashboard that provides real-time information on key placement statistics.
- **House Bill 1576**, requires DHS to reimburse counties for 50% of certain expenses related to juvenile delinquency, including medical treatment, legal representation, and transportation.
- **House Bill 1577**, creates new standards for the care of children in institutional settings. It limits the use of restrictive procedures - such as seclusion, physical restraints, and searches - to situations where there is an immediate risk of serious physical harm. The bill directs the Department of Human Services to conduct inspections, investigate complaints, and enforce compliance through various measures, including license revocation and referral for criminal investigation.

As these legislative efforts continue to progress, counties remain engaged with the General Assembly to ensure that county needs are understood and addressed throughout the legislative process.

U.S DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR ANNOUNCES PILT FUNDING

On June 24, the U.S. Department of Interior **announced** that more than 1,900 state and local governments across the country will receive a total of \$644.8 million in Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) funding for 2025. Pennsylvania is set to **receive** approximately \$1.5 million through the program, covering more than 675,000 acres of federally owned land.

This year’s national PILT allocation reflects an increase of \$23.5 million compared to 2024. Pennsylvania’s share rose by \$34,556 from the previous fiscal year. The annual fluctuations in funding are due to several factors, including updates to acreage data provided by federal land management agencies, adjustments for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, population changes, and reports submitted by state governors detailing prior-year federal revenue-sharing payments.

DOJ ENDS FUNDING FOR PREA RESOURCE CENTER

In April of 2025, the U.S. Department of Justice made the decision to terminate funding for

the Nation Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Resource Center and associated federal support programs. This action effectively dismantled the national infrastructure that has been essential to PREA compliance and undermines more than two decades of bipartisan progress toward eliminating sexual abuse in correctional facilities.

Enacted in 2003, PREA was created to address the urgent crisis of sexual violence in our national detention systems. Since 2009, the National PREA Resource Center has provided essential training, technical assistance, auditing, and best practices to jurisdictions of all sizes – including county jails. Its defunding leaves counties without the federal support needed to uphold PREA standards.

The impact is significant. Under-resourced and understaffed county correctional facilities must now absorb the full burden of PREA compliance, resulting in:

- Loss of training and technical assistance for staff development and policy implementation;
- Increased legal and financial risk due to non-compliance, including potential lawsuits and loss of federal funding;
- Greater vulnerability for at-risk populations;
- Reduced oversight from the absence of standardized audits and national data collection; and
- Severe fiscal strain on local budgets already stretched thin.

Pennsylvania's counties remain committed to the goals of PREA and the responsibility to protect individuals in our custody. However, without continued federal partnership, meeting these obligations becomes increasingly difficult.

CCAP strongly urges the Department of Justice to reinstate funding for the National PREA Resource Center and related support programs. Restoring these resources would reaffirm the federal government's commitment to safe, humane, and legally compliant correctional systems. To highlight the urgency of this issue, CCAP has submitted a letter to the U.S. Attorney General outlining the consequences of this decision and calling for immediate action.

FCC WAIVES ADDITIONAL REGULATION OF JAIL TELECOMMUNICATION FEES UNTIL 2027

On June 30, 2025, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) acted to waive implementation of new rate caps, site commission prohibitions, and per-minute pricing rules until April 1, 2027, unless the Commission sets an alternative date. The full order can be found [here](#).

New limitations on fees for inmate phone calls and video calls were created in a [July 2024 rulemaking](#). Those limits had phased implementation deadlines, which are now waived. The greatly reduced per minute fees and prohibitions on site commissions left counties unable to ensure that these complex communications systems had the necessary security to safeguard public safety. The rulemaking rates of 2021 rates will continue to apply through April 1, 2027, or a future date set by the FCC.

FCC Chairman Carr said in a statement "This effort will allow IPCS providers and facilities time to address implementation challenges and will preserve the status quo while the Commission assesses potential changes to its IPCS rules based on the record that has developed." His statement emphasizes the need to balance increased access to communications and the security needed for these systems.



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