

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

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COUNTY PRIORITIES DURING APPROPRIATIONS HEARINGS

The House and Senate have now concluded two weeks of Appropriations hearings, with the final sessions ending on Thursday, March 12. During this period, a range of county priorities were discussed, highlighting key issues that matter most to local governments. Below are some of the takeaways from hearings where 2026 county legislative priorities took center stage.

911 Funding and Statute Updates

Lawmakers in the House recently concluded their hearings with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), focusing in part on the funding and modernization of the state's 911 system. A key topic of discussion was the current funding framework that supports emergency communications. By directing a portion of the 911 surcharge toward the development of the Next Generation 911 (NG911) system, counties gain greater flexibility to use the formula-driven portion of surcharge revenue, along with county general funds, to cover other operational costs. Sustaining the effectiveness of this funding model depends on ensuring that revenue streams remain adequate to fully support both current and future emergency communication needs.

The conversation also highlighted the need for statutory updates to align with evolving NG911 protocols under Title 35. These updates would expand the system's capacity to incorporate new technologies, such as advanced text, video, and data transmission

capabilities, ensuring that residents can receive timely and effective assistance, regardless of the technology they use to contact emergency services.

County governments are on the front lines of operating this vital service, which guarantees that residents receive the rapid, coordinated response necessary in emergencies. Recognizing both the critical nature of 911 services and the evolving technological demands, counties continue to advocate for an increase in the 911 surcharge, from the current **\$1.95 to \$2.20**, and for legislative updates to support NG911 implementation. Such measures would not only strengthen public safety infrastructure but also provide counties with the resources needed to maintain and enhance this indispensable service for all Pennsylvanians.

County Mental Health Funding

The Department of Human Services' appropriations hearings in both the House and Senate concluded at the end of this week, with county mental health base funding emerging as a central topic of discussion.

Lawmakers reviewed how mental health funding is distributed across the Commonwealth, including allocations that support county governments. During these discussions, several legislators raised concerns that the current funding structure can create silos within the broader community-based mental health system. A consistent theme throughout the hearings was the need to strengthen collaboration between school districts and county mental health programs. Counties already maintain the infrastructure and service networks necessary to support schools in delivering mental health services, and enhanced coordination could help ensure that students and their families receive timely and effective care.

Legislators also discussed the financial pressures facing county mental health systems. In addition to ongoing fiscal constraints at the state level, counties are preparing for potential downstream impacts from changes to federal funding streams that support behavioral health services.

Department officials highlighted the Governor's investment of \$40 million in county mental health base services over the past two budget cycles. According to the department, these funds have helped support initiatives such as the development of behavioral health walk-in centers and crisis stabilization facilities.

As the primary administrators of community-based mental health services across Pennsylvania, counties continue to advocate for increased investment in county mental health funding to ensure individuals across the Commonwealth can access the care and support they need. The proposed \$5 million investment in crisis walk-in stabilization centers represents an important step toward strengthening the mental health system, providing immediate, stable treatment for individuals in crisis. Counties remain committed to addressing the full spectrum of mental health needs across the Commonwealth.

CCAP MEMBERS TAKE ON NACo CONFERENCE

Over the weekend of February 20, CCAP members and staff attended the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. This annual event brings together nearly 2,000 elected and appointed county officials to discuss federal

policies impacting counties nationwide.

During the conference, NACo released its federal legislative priorities for 2026, focusing on supporting counties through stronger federal partnerships, local flexibility, and resources to address transportation, public services, technology, and community resilience. For a comprehensive overview of NACo's 2026 legislative priorities, please refer to the [priorities webpage](#).

On the final day of the conference, CCAP members and staff met with members of Pennsylvania's congressional delegation, including both U.S. Senators, Senator Dave McCormick and Senator John Fetterman. Discussion focused on key issues affecting counties at both the federal and state levels, covering NACo's legislative priorities as well as CCAP's.

The meetings provided an opportunity to reinforce the importance of county government in federal policy discussions and advocate for critical funding and legislative priorities. CCAP members and staff left the conference with valuable insights and strengthened relationships that will support ongoing collaboration at both the state and federal levels.



GLASS TESTIFIES ON COUNTY CYBERSECURITY CHALLENGES

On February 25, Clearfield County Commissioner and CCAP First Vice President Dave Glass **testified** before the Pennsylvania House Local Government and Communications & Technology Committees on the growing cybersecurity challenges facing local governments.

In his remarks, Glass emphasized that counties take their responsibility seriously to safeguard sensitive personal information and ensure the continuity of the critical services they deliver and administer. He noted that Pennsylvania counties have experienced a range of significant cybersecurity incidents in recent years, underscoring the persistent and evolving landscape — particularly as counties increasingly rely on cloud-based applications and digital systems to serve residents.

Glass stressed that cybersecurity remains a top priority for counties. Across the Commonwealth, counties continue to invest in staff training, cybersecurity exercises, and employee education to promote strong security practices and reduce risk.

He also outlined several steps to further strengthen county cybersecurity efforts, including the establishment of a state cybersecurity coordination board to improve collaboration among state and local governments and the private sector. In addition, Glass highlighted the need for sustained state investment to help counties adapt to emerging threats, modernize systems, and implement best practices.

Counties remain committed to protecting sensitive information and upholding strong cybersecurity standards to maintain public trust and ensure the reliable delivery of essential services.



HOUSE ENERGY COMMITTEE CLEARS DATA CENTER BILLS

On Monday, March 2, the House Energy Committee advanced two bills focused on the responsible development of data centers in Pennsylvania and the provision of technical support to local governments.

House Bill 2150, introduced by Representative Kyle Mullins (D-Lackawanna), known as the Data Center Energy and Water Reporting Act, would require data centers to submit annual reports to the Department of Environmental Protection. These reports would detail monthly energy consumption, overall energy usage, and water employed for cooling, as well as outline measures taken by facilities to enhance efficiency.

House Bill 2151, introduced by Representative Kyle Donahue (D-Lackawanna), would amend the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code to authorize the Center for Local Government Services to provide municipalities with guidance on regulating data centers. The legislation directs the Center to develop a model zoning ordinance to assist local governments in establishing consistent standards for data center development.

Both bills received committee approval and now advance to the full House for further consideration.

HOUSE FILLS TWO SEATS, THREE VACANCIES REMAIN

On Tuesday, February 24, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives held special elections to fill vacancies in Allegheny and Lehigh counties.

In Lehigh County, Ana Tiburcio, a former Allentown School Board member, was elected to represent the 22nd Legislative District. She succeeds Rep. Josh Siegel, who resigned from the House after being elected Lehigh County Executive.

In Allegheny County, Jen Mazzocco, a former borough councilwoman, won the special election in the 42nd Legislative District. The seat became vacant after Rep. Dan Miller resigned following his election to the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas.

With these two seats filled, Democrats maintain a 102–98 majority in the House. However, three vacancies remain, which will be decided in upcoming special elections.

Special elections are scheduled for March 17 to fill the 79th District seat formerly held by Rep. Louis Schmitt (R–Blair), who was elected to the Blair County Court of Common Pleas, and the 193rd District seat formerly held by Rep. Torren Ecker (R–Adams), who was elected to the Adams County Court of Common Pleas. In addition, a special election for the 196th District seat, previously held by Rep. Seth Grove (R–York), is scheduled to coincide with the May 19 primary election.

IFO RELEASES FEBRUARY REVENUE UPDATE

The Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) released the monthly revenue update for [February 2026](#), showing that General Fund collections totaled \$2.96 billion, which was \$16 million (0.5%) below the IFO's official estimate. The slight shortfall was primarily driven by lower-than-expected motor vehicle sales and use tax (SUT) and inheritance tax collections, though these were largely offset by stronger nontax revenue performance.

Year-over-year, February 2026 General Fund collections were \$86 million (3.0%) higher than February 2025. Growth was supported by increases in personal income tax, non-motor vehicle sales and use tax, gaming, and several other tax categories, while declines in motor vehicle SUT and inheritance tax partially offset those gains.

Fiscal-year-to-date General Fund revenues through the end of February total \$28.41 billion, exceeding the IFO's official estimate by \$346 million (1.2%). Compared to the same point last fiscal year, year-to-date collections are \$1.44 billion (5.3%) higher. While corporate net income tax collections remain below estimate and trail the prior year, overall revenue growth continues to be driven by personal income tax, non-motor vehicle SUT, and strong nontax revenue performance in FY 2025–26.



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