

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

IN THIS EDITION

- **Priorities Sneak Peak: What's on the Agenda for Counties in 2026**
- **FY 2026-2027 Budget Address Set, Budget Hearings to Follow**
- **Joint Hearing Highlights Farmer Mental Health Resources**
- **U.S. House Clears Final Minibus Funding Package**
- **NACo Legislative Conference**

PRIORITIES SNEAK PEAK: WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA FOR COUNTIES IN 2026

The legislative priorities selected each fall by CCAP members are not just CCAP priorities – they are truly county priorities chosen by Pennsylvania's counties. Each fall prior to the CCAP Fall Conference, members of CCAP's policy committees meet to develop proactive legislative work plans. These plans focus their efforts on a set of actions and objectives to address county issues and goals in the coming year. From those meetings, committees suggest priorities, which are then reviewed by the Resolutions and Policy Committee and ultimately voted on by all members, composed of county commissioners, chief clerks, county administrators, and solicitors, during the Fall Conference hybrid business meeting.

As another year begins, Pennsylvania's counties have selected three legislative priorities for 2026, each of which highlights CCAP members' commitment to core county responsibilities and ultimately to the people and communities in Pennsylvania.

CCAP Board members will announce the 2026 priorities on **Wednesday, January 28**, and a special edition bulletin will be sent out to highlight them following the announcement. Additional information and resources on each priority will also be available at www.pacounties.org and on the [Priorities webpage](#).

FY 2026-2027 BUDGET ADDRESS SET, BUDGET HEARINGS TO FOLLOW

The House and Senate will convene during a joint session on Tuesday, February 3, to hear the annual budget address, which will preview Governor Shapiro's proposed FY 2026-2027 budget. The Governor is scheduled to deliver his address around noon in the Capitol. It is typically broadcast live on the Pennsylvania Cable Network, as well as through streaming video on a variety of legislative websites. Following the address, CCAP will analyze the proposed funding levels and provide information to counties on the proposal.

After the address, the House and Senate Appropriations committees will be holding hearings on the Governor's FY 2026-2027 commonwealth budget beginning the week of February 23, with the Senate hearings concluding on March 5 and House hearings wrapping up on March 12.

More information, including a budget analysis for counties and the complete budget hearing schedule, can be found on CCAP's [Budget News webpage](#).

JOINT HEARING HIGHLIGHTS FARMER MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

On January 14, the House and Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees held a joint hearing titled "Supporting Farmers Through the Mental Health Crisis" to examine the current state of farmer mental health and explore opportunities for improvement. The hearing featured a diverse panel of experts who discussed existing programs addressing mental health challenges in the agricultural community and how these resources can be better utilized to support farmers.

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary, Russell Reading, highlighted the significant pressures contributing to stress among farmers, including weather uncertainty, market volatility, and farm transitions. He referenced the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network administered through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, which has provided \$10 million nationally for support services and assisted at least 107 Pennsylvania farm families.

Ginger Fenton, a dairy extension educator with Penn State Extension, shared the wide range of resources developed by the Penn State Extension Farm Stress Team to address mental health needs within the agricultural community. She highlighted several initiatives, including the Farm Stress: Real Talk podcast and the Mending the Stress webinar series.

The webinar has been offered 23 times and has reached more than 850 registrants across 43 states.

Panelists emphasized the variety of mental health resources available to Pennsylvania farmers and the importance of ensuring awareness and access to these services. As mental

health funding remains a priority for CCAP, and as mental health challenges continue to affect all aspects of communities and professions, including agriculture, CCAP continues to advocate for sustained investments in mental health systems to ensure adequate funding and accessible resources for those in crisis. This hearing underscored how collaboration among stakeholders and community members can lead to meaningful progress when addressing shared challenges.

U.S. HOUSE CLEARS FINAL MINIBUS FUNDING PACKAGE

On Thursday, January 22, the U.S. House approved the final Fiscal Year 2026 [appropriations minibus package](#). The legislation provides funding increases across several priority areas, including national defense, and supports key federal departments such as Health and Human Services, Labor, and Housing and Urban Development, among others.

The bill now advances to the U.S. Senate for consideration. Congress has seven days to pass the measure and send it to the President for signature to avert a lapse in funding for multiple federal programs. For additional details, please refer to the National Association of Counties [website](#).

NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

The National Association of Counties (NACo) will host its 2026 Legislative Conference in person in Washington, D.C., from February 21–24, 2026. This annual gathering brings together nearly 2,000 elected and appointed county officials from across the nation to focus on federal policy issues that directly affect county governments.

The conference provides a valuable opportunity for county leaders to engage with peers from across the country, discuss pressing policy challenges, share best practices, and exchange ideas. Attendees will also have the opportunity to meet directly with members of Congress and congressional staff to advocate for county priorities on Capitol Hill.

During the conference, NACo's ten policy steering committees will convene to review, debate, and vote on interim policy resolutions that will shape the association's advocacy agenda through the Annual Conference in July. For additional details, please visit the conference webpage on the [NACo website](#).



County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
PO Box 60769 | Harrisburg, PA 17106-0769

Did someone forward you this email? [**Sign up to stay up-to-date on topics**](#) affecting Pennsylvania's counties!

[**Unsubscribe**](#) from this newsletter.

[**View this email in your browser.**](#)

© 2026 All rights reserved.