

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

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COUNTY LEADERS ANNOUNCE 2026 PRIORITIES AT THE CAPITOL

On January 28, county leaders from across the commonwealth gathered in Harrisburg to announce their [three legislative priorities](#) for 2026. These priorities reflect the most urgent challenges counties face as they work every day to deliver essential services and support the well-being of their communities.

At the forefront of counties' advocacy efforts is securing a \$40 million increase in county mental health base funding in the 2026–2027 state budget. Counties serve as the backbone of Pennsylvania's community-based mental health system, yet funding has not kept pace with rising demand, inflation, or workforce pressures. This critical investment is necessary to stabilize and strengthen mental health services statewide and to ensure long-term, sustainable, and equitable care for some of Pennsylvania's most vulnerable residents. Without immediate action, counties will continue to face growing gaps in services, limiting access to care at a time when the need has never been greater.

Counties are also advocating for updates to 911 funding and statute. Specifically, counties support increasing the 911 surcharge—the primary funding source for 911 call-taking and dispatch operations—to \$2.20 through the next reauthorization period. This increase would better align revenues with the rising costs of Next Generation 911 (NG911) systems. As

emergency communications technology advances faster than existing funding, counties need consistent, sustainable resources to serve as the first line of emergency response. Adequate funding and statutory updates are essential to ensuring fast, reliable access to 911 services for residents and visitors across Pennsylvania.

The third legislative priority focuses on assisting counties with conducting timely property reassessments. Under Pennsylvania law, counties are solely responsible for valuing and assessing all properties, yet they do so without state oversight or a supervising agency. Counties also vary widely in population trends, property types, market conditions, and administrative capacity, all of which influence when a reassessment is necessary. To support this responsibility, counties are advocating for dedicated funding, such as a reliable state grant program or a modest recording or deed fee, to help offset assessment-related costs and support system improvements. Counties are also seeking modernization and data reforms, statewide best practices, and a more coordinated approach with the state to promote timely, accurate, and equitable property assessments across the commonwealth.

By prioritizing mental health funding, securing sustainable 911 resources, and supporting timely county reassessments, counties are advancing policy solutions that will directly improve the lives of Pennsylvanians. These legislative priorities are not just about efficiency—they are about ensuring that communities across the commonwealth have the tools and resources they need to remain safe, healthy, and strong. For more information on CCAP's 2026 legislative priorities, please visit the [priorities webpage](#).



GOVERNOR RELEASES 2026-27 BUDGET: WHERE DO COUNTIES LAND?

On February 3, Governor Shapiro unveiled his FY 2026–2027 Executive Budget proposal, outlining \$53.3 billion in total spending—\$2.7 billion, or 5.4 percent, more than the enacted FY 2025–2026 budget after supplemental appropriations. The proposal maintains current personal income and sales tax rates, the Commonwealth’s two largest revenue sources. However, the budget relies on approximately \$4.7 billion from the Rainy Day Fund to achieve balance, marking the third consecutive year of multibillion-dollar structural deficits. Proposed revenue assumptions include nearly \$2 billion from the legalization of adult-use marijuana and the imposition of new taxes on skill games.

The mental health services line reflects an increase of nearly \$65 million, representing a 7% rise from the prior fiscal year. This funding supports several key human services initiatives, including mental health crisis stabilization centers, Community Hospital Integration Project programs, 988 crisis hoteling operations, and diversion and discharge programs for individuals with mental illness involved in the criminal justice system.

To help keep up with increasing service demand, workforce challenges, and rising operating costs, counties are seeking a \$40 million increase in FY 2026–2027. Additional base funding would help ensure these investments are sustainable and that counties can continue providing timely access to mental health services across the Commonwealth.

While not addressed in the Executive Budget, counties will continue to emphasize the urgent need to consider an increase to the 911 surcharge as part of broader budget negotiations. As system costs rise and critical technological upgrades loom, counties will advocate for surcharge adjustments to ensure the long-term sustainability of emergency communications systems statewide.

As budget negotiations move forward, counties remain committed to working collaboratively with the General Assembly to ensure critical programs and services receive adequate and sustainable funding in FY 2026–2027 and beyond. For additional details on the Governor’s budget proposal, visit the Pennsylvania Office of the Budget’s [website](#). CCAP will provide a detailed breakdown of the proposed budget to assist counties in understanding the implications.

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING ACT BILL CLEARS LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

On Wednesday, February 4, [House Bill 1291](#), was reported from the House Local Government Committee and now awaits consideration on the House floor. Introduced by Representative Robert Freeman (D-Northampton), the bill would amend the Newspaper Advertising Act to require public notices to continue appearing in print newspapers of general circulation, permitting digital or free newspaper publication’s only when no qualifying print option exists.

While counties support the goal of modernizing Pennsylvania’s public notice requirements, CCAP opposes HB 1291 as drafted. The legislation does not reflect how residents access information today and fails to provide counties with the flexibility or cost efficiencies needed to better serve taxpayers.

Counties remain deeply committed to transparency and public accountability. All 67 counties maintain publicly accessible websites, and many already post public notices online, often in real time, using searchable archives and electronic alerts to expand access beyond traditional print readership.

Counties share the General Assembly's commitment to ensuring public notices remain open, accessible, and transparent. However, HB 1291 falls short of meaningful modernization. Counties urge continued collaboration with legislators and stakeholders to advance legislation that preserves public access while allowing local governments to communicate more effectively, efficiently, and responsibly.

LEGISLATION ADVANCES AMENDING THE SUNSHINE ACT

On Wednesday, February 4, the House Local Government Committee advanced [House Bill 2146](#), introduced by Representative Robert Freeman (D–Northampton), which now awaits further consideration on the House floor.

House Bill 2146 stems from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's interpretation of amendments to the Sunshine Act enacted in 2021. In that decision, the Court determined that school boards and other governing bodies are permitted to add action items to a publicly posted meeting agenda by a simple majority vote during the meeting.

In response, HB 2146 would reverse that interpretation by requiring local governments to schedule and publicly advertise a separate meeting if an unexpected matter arises after an agenda has been published, eliminating the current 24-hour notice allowance.

Local governments routinely encounter important issues that emerge after meeting agendas are finalized. While these matters are often not emergencies, they are frequently time-sensitive and could be addressed appropriately during the scheduled meeting. Despite best efforts to plan ahead, it is not always possible to anticipate every issue that may require governing body action.

Without the ability to amend an agenda during a public meeting, local governments would face delayed decision-making, increased administrative burdens, and the need to convene additional special meetings at taxpayer expense, potentially limiting their ability to respond promptly to immediate community needs.

CCAP-SUPPORTED LEGISLATION MOVES TO FULL HOUSE FOR CONSIDERATION

On Tuesday, February 3, the House State Government Committee passed [House Bill 1278](#) that would eliminate the requirement for a notarized affidavit on nomination petitions and instead allow candidates to submit an unsworn statement. Introduced by Representative

Nate Davidson (D–Dauphin), the bill now awaits further consideration on the House floor. In addition to clarifying nomination petition requirements, the legislation removes a barrier for potential candidates who may not be able to afford or easily access a notary.

CCAP supports this legislation as it reduces unnecessary obstacles for those running for office. By simplifying the process, the bill would cut down on paperwork and confusion while maintaining the integrity and security of the nomination process. The bill passed unanimously and now advances to the House floor for consideration.

CONGRESS PASSES FUNDING BILL, ENDING SHUTDOWN

The federal government shutdown has ended after Congress passed a funding bill, which was signed into law by President Trump. The bill funds most federal agencies through September 30, 2026, restores operations, and provides back pay for furloughed federal employees. The Department of Homeland Security received short-term funding through February 13, giving lawmakers time to negotiate longer-term appropriations. While the shutdown is over, DHS funding and related negotiations remain ongoing.

IFO RELEASES JANUARY REVENUE UPDATE

The Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) released the [monthly revenue update](#) for January 2026, showing that General Fund collections totaled \$3.94 billion, which was \$146 million (3.9%) above the IFO's official estimate. The monthly overperformance was driven primarily by temporary factors, including a large inheritance tax deposit day and a one-time delayed transfer of interest related to tobacco settlement bonds, with no impact going forward.

Year-over-year, January 2026 General Fund collections were \$11 million (0.3%) higher than January 2025, with gains in inheritance tax, sales and use tax, gaming, and nontax revenues offsetting declines in personal income tax and corporate net income tax collections.

Fiscal-year-to-date General Fund revenues through the end of January total \$25.45 billion, exceeding the IFO's official estimate by \$362 million (1.4%). Compared to the same point last fiscal year, year-to-date collections are \$1.35 billion (5.6%) higher, reflecting continued revenue growth in FY 2025–26.



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