

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

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CCAP 2026 Spring Conference

CCAP successfully concluded its 2026 Spring Conference earlier this week. Spanning three days from Sunday through Tuesday, the conference featured a robust, policy-focused agenda, including CCAP policy committee meetings that reviewed work plan progress and facilitated meaningful engagement with key state partners.

Throughout the conference, CCAP hosted a series of informative sessions with participation from legislators and agency officials, creating valuable opportunities to discuss critical issues facing counties. Conversations covered a wide range of topics, including data centers, ATVs, housing, and other emerging priorities impacting local communities.

On Monday, March 16, CCAP was honored to host its second annual legislative reception. During this event, the distinguished CCAP Friend of County Government Award was presented to Secretary Val Arkoosh, Senator Scott Martin (R-Lancaster), and Senator Judy Schwank (D-Berks). CCAP extends its appreciation to the many legislators who attended the reception and took time to engage with members in advancing sound public policy for the shared constituents of the Commonwealth.

On the final day of the conference, Senator Dawn Keefer (R-York) generously hosted a luncheon for attendees before guiding members to the Senate chamber, where they were formally recognized during session. CCAP is grateful to Senator Keefer for her leadership and

continued partnership in elevating county priorities and creating opportunities for member engagement.

Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to making the 2026 CCAP Spring Conference a success. We look forward to continuing this momentum at the 2026 Annual Conference and Trade Show in August in Monroe County.



ZONING STUDY PASSES SENATE COMMITTEE

On Monday, March 16, the Senate Local Government Committee advanced [Senate Resolution 211](#), introduced by Senator Judy Schwank (D-Berks). The resolution directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a comprehensive study and issue a report evaluating the effectiveness and performance of the Municipalities Planning Code, including its administration and enforcement by the Department of Community and Economic Development.

The study will examine a range of key issues, including housing affordability and local economic development, administrative and compliance costs, and the structure of planning and zoning statutes. It will also include a review of permitting processes and a comparison of best practices from peer states to identify potential improvements.

The resolution was approved by the committee and now awaits further consideration by the full Senate.

SENATE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ADVANCES VETERANS CLAIMS ASSISTANCE STANDARDS

On Tuesday, March 17, the Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee advanced [Senate Bill 1209](#), introduced by Senator Tracy Pennycuick (R-Berks). The bill establishes new standards for individuals and businesses that charge veterans for assistance with benefits claims, including registration requirements, fee limitations, and consumer protection measures. It also enhances the use of the Veterans' Trust Fund by directing penalty revenues into the fund and supporting grants for veterans' service officer programs, while strengthening enforcement mechanisms.

County veterans affairs offices serve as trusted, front-line resources for those who have served. County veterans service officers play a vital role in helping veterans navigate the often complex claims process and access earned benefits. Addressing predatory practices through legislation is an important step toward strengthening consumer protections, while reinforcing the need for strong oversight and accountability. Counties appreciate the sponsors' attention to this issue and look forward to continued collaboration as the bill advances in the Senate.

SUNSHINE WEEK: MODERNIZING PUBLIC NOTICE

In recognition of Sunshine Week, a national, nonpartisan initiative that highlights the importance of open government, transparency, and public access to information, counties are reaffirming their commitment to ensuring residents can easily access public notices in ways that reflect how people consume information today.

[Senate Bill 194](#), introduced by Senator Doug Mastriano (R-Adams), aligns with these principles by modernizing Title 45 (Legal Notices) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes. The legislation provides local governments with greater flexibility in how they meet public notice requirements, allowing them to publish notices in a newspaper of general circulation, post them on an official government website, or use a publicly accessible website dedicated to legal advertisements.

Counties support this legislation because it strengthens transparency. By offering a range of options, Senate Bill 194 ensures that public notices remain accessible while also allowing counties to adopt more cost-effective and widely used communication methods. This flexibility helps local governments meet residents where they are, whether in print or online.

During Sunshine Week, which emphasizes the public's right to know, Senate Bill 194 represents a practical step forward—modernizing outdated requirements while preserving the core goal of keeping citizens informed and engaged in their local government.

HOUSE SPECIAL ELECTIONS FILLS TWO VACANCIES; ONE REMAINS

On March 17, the House held special elections to fill two vacant seats. In the 193rd District, which includes parts of Adams and Cumberland Counties, Catherine Wallen (R) was elected. Wallen will succeed Torren Ecker, who stepped down after being appointed to serve as an Adams County Judge. In the 79th District, which includes Blair County, Andrea Verobish (R) secured the seat. Verobish will replace Louis Schmitt Jr., who was elected to the Blair County Court of Common Pleas.

With these victories, Democrats maintain control of the state House, holding a 102–100 majority.

One House vacancy remains in the 196th District, which includes part of York County. That seat became open following the resignation of Seth Grove. The special election to fill the vacancy is scheduled for May 19, coinciding with the primary election.

U.S. SENATE ADVANCES ROAD TO HOUSING ACT

On March 12, the U.S. Senate passed the bipartisan [21st Century ROAD to Housing Act](#).

Sens. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) introduced the bill, which seeks to expand community housing supply, modernize key housing and community development programs, and reduce artificial costs to construction. It also includes a moratorium on large institutional investors buying single family home; which has been a priority of the White House.

The legislation contains eight provisions, several of which are particularly notable. It would prohibit institutional investors that own 350 or more single-family homes from acquiring additional properties. The bill also proposes reforms to the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, including raising income eligibility thresholds to better address workforce housing needs. Additionally, it allocates \$200 million in housing innovation grants to support high-performing counties and local governments in developing and scaling effective housing supply strategies.

The legislation now moves to the full U.S. House of Representatives for further consideration. For a more detailed analysis of the package, please refer to the National Association of Counties (NACo) legislative analysis available on their [website](#).

U.S. HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ADVANCES FARM BILL

On March 5, the U.S. House Agriculture Committee advanced the 2026 Farm Bill, formally titled the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 ([H.R. 7567](#)). During committee consideration, several amendments were adopted that carry significant implications for county governments.

Notable provisions include enhancements related to broadband access, expanded rural energy opportunities through the Renewable Energy for America Program, and increased support for entrepreneurship and investments in rural health access.

The legislation now moves to the full U.S. House of Representatives for further consideration. For a more detailed analysis of the Farm Bill, please refer to the National Association of Counties (NACo) legislative analysis available on their [website](#).



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

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