

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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

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ACT NOW- PA'S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM IS AT RISK

Both the House and Senate returned to Harrisburg last week, marking the start of the final push to pass the FY 2025-2026 state budget ahead of the constitutionally mandated June 30 deadline. As leaders in both chambers, along with Governor Shapiro, continue budget negotiations, CCAP continues to closely monitor developments and communicating potential impacts.

While counties are aware of the challenges of developing the commonwealth budget—managing their own constrained budgets to provide public services—they continue to emphasize the urgent need to invest in Pennsylvania's mental health system. For the last decade, counties have called for increased funding for essential and preventive mental health services. County leaders across all 67 counties are pressing for the full \$100 million increase in base funding for the coming fiscal year. Amid fiscal pressures, from federal budget uncertainty to the state's own budget deficit, county voices are more critical than ever to ensure local mental health services are not overlooked or underfunded.

Counties must continue to speak up to ensure both lawmakers and local residents understand that without this funding, the already stretched mental health system will continue to deteriorate. Pennsylvania has passed the point of critical need, and the system cannot be sustained without significant investment.

Counties remain committed to call on Governor Shapiro, legislative leadership, and members of the General Assembly to finally prioritize the mental health and well-being of the people of this commonwealth. The time to act is now.

For additional details on the mental health budget request, CCAP has a range of resources available on the [County Priorities](#) webpage.

LBFC RELEASES 911 & 988 STUDY

On June 11, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) released its [report](#) on the efficiency of Pennsylvania's 911 and 988 systems. Conducted pursuant to Act 34 of 2023, the report examines the performance of the state's 911 communications services and evaluates opportunities to enhance interoperability with the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline. While Pennsylvania completed its first phase of the Next Generation 911 (NG911) transition in April 2025, challenges remain. Some rural service providers continue to use outdated analog systems, driving up costs and risking service disruptions. The report recommends that the General Assembly, in consultation with PEMA and the 911 Advisory Board, establish a limited, needs-based fund to help small providers complete the NG911 transition. It also highlights growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual Public Safety Answering Points in county call centers, urging the development of clear standards, audit procedures, and cybersecurity protections for AI, Internet of Things devices (IoT), and remote operations.

The report also addresses longstanding issues with funding and staffing. Despite a recent increase in the 911 service surcharge from \$1.65 to \$1.95, many counties report that funding remains insufficient and telecommunicator shortages continue to hamper operations. Given the technological changes brought by NG911, the report recommends a new feasibility study to determine whether integrating or improving interoperability between Pennsylvania State Police and county dispatch systems is now more viable.

On the 988 side, full integration with the 911 system is not recommended due to the fundamental differences in their roles- 988 focuses on crisis stabilization, while 911 handles emergency response. However, the report stresses the importance of improving interoperability between the two systems. Few calls require transfer between 911 and 988, but stakeholders on both sides have raised concerns about liability and lack of mutual protocols. To address this, the report recommends legislative action to mandate interoperability standards and provide liability protections for 911 staff when calls are transferred.

With the release of the long awaited LBFC report, counties continue to stress the importance of providing ample funding for the 911 system and appreciate the recognition of a need for additional resources in the report.

This report reinforces not only the growth that the Commonwealth's 911 system has experienced over the past few years, but also the need to properly fund and maintain the system as we explore the new horizon of Next Generation 911 (NG911), system sharing, technological innovations and advancements that come with that. Counties have continued to call on the General Assembly and Administration to allow a surcharge that properly fits the system, and ultimately our residents', emergency response needs. We cannot simply push this issue off past 2026, as it could negatively impact 911 system efficiencies and advancements, falling to the county property taxpayer as discussions in Harrisburg continue. Counties know what they need and have come to a reasonable request that ensures county public safety answering points (PSAPs) have what they need to deliver the 911 service people expect to receive, often in their time of greatest need.

As the January 31, 2026 expiration of the current \$1.95 surcharge quickly approaching, time is of the essence. Action is needed now to increase the surcharge to \$2.20 to ensure the system is adequately funded and maintained so that when someone in the commonwealth calls 911, they reach a live, highly trained professional who serves on the front lines of emergency response.

For more information on CCAP's 911 funding priority, please visit the [County Priorities](#) webpage.

REENTRY BILL PASSES HOUSE CHAMBER

On June 3, [House Bill 282](#), introduced by Representative Tim Briggs (D-Montgomery), passed out of the House and has been referred to the Senate Health and Human Services

Committee for further consideration. House Bill 282 proposes amendments to the Human Services Code to authorize a reentry program under the state's medical assistance program for incarcerated individuals. Currently, when an individual receiving medical assistance becomes incarcerated, their benefits are temporality suspended and only reactivated upon release. The bill maintains that structure but allows for new provisions, effective January 1, 2026, subject to federal approval.

The proposed reentry program would enable eligible incarcerated individuals to access certain medical services prior to release, including substance use disorder treatment and case management services. The program would be voluntary for counties, which could apply to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to have their correctional institutions participate. This bill aims to ease the transition from incarceration to community life by ensuring continuity of care and support for individuals reentering society. Counties recognize the importance of improving reentry outcomes and support this legislation as a tool to strengthen community health and reduce recidivism. Counties remain committed to partnering with the General Assembly to advance this bill through the legislative process.

VEXATIOUS REQUESTOR BILL PASSES OUT OF THE COMMITTEE

On June 3, the Senate State Government Committee passed [Senate Bill 790](#), introduced by Senator Cris Dush (R-Centre), which now awaits further consideration on the Senate floor. The bill would allow agencies to petition the Office of Open Records for relief from individuals they believe are "vexatious requesters". In recent years, counties and other local governments have seen a noticeable increase in the number of requests from individuals who misuse the Right-to-Know Law (RTKL) to burden agencies with excessive or abusive records request. In response, local governments have advocated for thoughtful amendments to the RTKL that would provide agencies with a process for seeking relief.

Counties remain committed to upholding transparency and ensuring residents have access to public information. At the same time, it's critical to protect agencies from individuals who weaponize the law. Counties look forward to continuing to work with the bill's sponsor and the State Government Committee to strengthen the bill's guardrails and develop a solution that fairly balances transparency with the need to prevent abuse of the system.

PREVAILING WAGE BILL PASSES OUT OF THE HOUSE

On May 6, [House Bill 846](#), introduced by Representative Jason Dawkins (D-Philadelphia), passed out of the House chamber and now awaits further consideration in the Senate. The legislation proposes to expand the scope of the Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act by including custom fabrication and HVAC duct cleaning in its coverage, and by prohibiting the use of split wage rates for workers on public projects.

While this bill aims to enhance worker protections, counties are concerned about the growing fiscal pressures it would place on local governments. Expanding prevailing wage requirements to include offsite custom fabrication would significantly raise the cost of public infrastructure projects- at a time when counties are already grappling with tight budgets and rising construction costs. This could lead to fewer projects being completed and critical community improvements being delayed or abandoned altogether. Counties instead urge the General Assembly to prioritize modernizing a key component of the Prevailing Wage Act: the \$25,000 project threshold, which has remained unchanged since the law was enacted in the 1960s. In today's economy, this outdated threshold captures nearly all public construction projects, regardless of size or complexity. Raising the threshold to reflect inflation and current market conditions is a top priority for counties and would ensure that taxpayer dollars are used more efficiently and effectively to meet the growing needs of Pennsylvania's communities. Counties remained committed to working with the legislature and the Administration to enact reforms that balance fair wages with responsible stewardship of public funds.

FLEXIBILITY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING PASSES OUT OF COMMITTEE

On June 10, [Senate Bill 194](#), introduced by Senator Doug Mastriano (R-Franklin/Adams), was reported out of committee as amended and now awaits consideration of the Senate floor. This bill amends Title 45 (Legal Notices) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to give local governments greater flexibility in how they meet legal advertising and public notice requirements.

Specifically, the bill allows local governments to fulfill public notice obligations through one of several methods:

- Publication in a newspaper of general circulation,
- Posting on the official website of the local government, or
- Posting on a publicly accessible website primarily dedicated to legal advertisements or notices.

The bill also establishes a new defined "alternative publication method", which includes publication on the local government's or county's official website- or a link directing to the notice- and physical posting at a designated public location.

However, to use an online posting method, the local government must first adopt a resolution stating its intent and post public notice of the change using previously advertising methods. This bill also requires physical posting of the notice at the government office and meeting location and mandates retention of each notice for at least three years. Importantly, the bill does not remove the requirement to publish in a legal journal where already mandated by law.

Counties support this legislation, as it provides a menu of options to meet legal notice requirements in a way that is more cost-effective and reflective of modern communication methods. For years, counties and other local governments have raised concerns about the financial burden and limited flexibility associated with current public notice laws. Senate Bill 194 addresses those concerns by enabling local governments to choose the method that works best for their communities. Counties commend the Senate Local Government Committee for advancing this important measure and look forward to working with stakeholders to move the bill forward.

HOUSE ENERGY COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON RESET BILL

On Monday, the House Energy Committee held a public hearing on [House Bill 502](#), sponsored by Representative Mandy Steele (D-Allegheny), to gather feedback from stakeholders across the commonwealth. House Bill 502 proposes the creation of the Reliable Energy Siting and Electric Transition (RESET) Board within the Department of Environment Protection. This new entity would be granted the authority to issue "Certificates to Reliable Energy Supply" for the siting and approval of large-scale energy generation and storage facilities.

While the intent to streamline energy infrastructure development is recognized, House Bill 502 presents significant challenges to the integrity of local governance. Local government stakeholders' officials who testified at the hearing raised concerns about the bill's sweeping preemption of local land use authority. By shifting decision-making from local governments to a state-level board- one that notably lacks local government representation- the bill threatens to marginalize community voices and disregard planning considerations unique to each region. The bill's top-down approach undermines long-standing planning structures established under the Pennsylvania's Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247 of 1969). Local elected officials are uniquely equipped to evaluate infrastructure capacity, environmental conditions, and land use priorities within their communities.

As currently drafted, counties oppose House Bill 502. However, counties have submitted

recommendations to the committee, offering amendments that would address these concerns will still supporting responsible energy development. Counties strongly encouraged continued dialogue and a commitment to intergovernmental partnership. Ensuring that local governments have a seat at the table is not only essential to upholding community values- it is critical to advancing energy policy that is equitable, effective, and environmentally sound.

IFO ISSUES MAY REVENUE UPDATE

The Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) released the monthly revenue **update** for May 2025, reporting that the General Fund collections totaled \$3.23 billion, which was \$33 million (1.0%) below the IFO's initial estimate. In particular, collections from personal income tax and sales and use tax exceeded the IFO's monthly projections by \$26 million and \$16 million, respectively. May 2025 collections were \$124 million (-3.7%) lower than during the same month of the previous year.

Fiscal year-to-date state revenues for FY 2024-2025 through the end of May continue to outperform the IFO's official estimate by \$599 million (+1.3%) for a total of \$43.67 billion. Additionally, year-to-date collections are \$827 million (+2.0%) higher compared to this time last year.

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