

A photograph of the Pennsylvania State Capitol building in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The building features a prominent central dome with a green patina and a golden finial. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. In the foreground, there are bare trees and a flagpole with the Pennsylvania state flag.

*Pennsylvania*  
**House Republican  
Caucus**

**2015-16 Legislative Session**  
*Session Report*



# THE COMMITMENT TO PENNSYLVANIA

PA House Republicans believe in the American Dream. We want people to move up the ladder of success, and we are committed to helping build a more prosperous and better Pennsylvania to help make the American Dream a reality for all Pennsylvanians.

- We want every Pennsylvanian to have the opportunity for a good-paying job or career.
- We want every child to have a quality education.
- We want every community to be safe for residents, families and visitors.

PA House Republican members understand that the road to a more prosperous Pennsylvania is through strengthened private-sector job creation, and that means leaner government and low taxes.

This session, Republicans successfully fought off Governor Wolf's massive tax and spend budget proposals.

Respecting the hardworking taxpayer, PA House Republicans commit to work toward:

- Getting government out of the way to allow people to fulfill the American Dream through self-sufficiency.
- Restoring a healthier economy by improving the state business climate.
- Building a workforce for tomorrow through successful schools.
- Providing an efficient and effective government
- Improving the quality of life in our communities.

Putting words into action this session, PA House Republicans led the way to assist Pennsylvania families in achieving the American Dream by reforming two programs which contained disincentives to economic growth and self-reliance. Act 92 of 2015 (House Bills 1164 and 934) allows low-income families to earn their way out of poverty through educational supports by reforming the "KEYS" program, and breaks down the so-called "benefits cliff" for child care assistance programs.

The legislation grew out the GOP Majority Policy Committee's "Empowering Opportunities: Gateways Out of Poverty" initiative, which held hearings across the state to gain a better understanding of issues related to gaining self-sufficiency and crafting legislative solutions. The committee worked with community groups, nonprofits and municipal officials.

## **The Republican / Democrat Difference**

While Democrats focus their efforts on the permanent low-level, or entry-level, jobs and keeping the people on a government leash through

entitlement programs and private employer mandates, PA House Republicans are committed to put words into action with initiatives aimed at improving the jobs climate to help grow family-sustaining jobs and career opportunities.

## **Achievements**

Pennsylvania's House Republican Caucus is committed to our state's residents and taxpayers. Constantly striving to strengthen the economy, enact commonsense public policy, and provide a government that's both efficient and effective, the Pennsylvania House Republican Caucus is out front, fighting to make Pennsylvania the best place to live, work and raise a family.

By working together, we have accomplished much and shown we stand by our commitments. One of the foremost accomplishments this session was resolving the prolonged budget "impasse" and fighting the governor's and Democrats' efforts to significantly increase spending, specifically the proposed increase the state sales taxes and income taxes.

## **Major Legislative Accomplishments**

### **Restoring a Healthier Economy**

- Balancing a \$31.6 billion budget without raising sales or income taxes. (Act 16A of 2016)
- Taking fear out of labor disputes. The House led the way to end a strange loophole which allowed harassment, stalking and threats of using weapons of mass destruction if done as part of a labor dispute. No more. (Act 59 of 2015)
- Allowing consumers more choice and convenience in the way they purchase adult beverages in Pennsylvania with the ABC and Wine Privatization Act. (Act 39 of 2016)

### **Respecting Hardworking Taxpayers**

- Adopting a fair Basic Education Funding formula without destabilizing school districts by providing a funding base while ensuring districts with growing populations are more fairly funded. (Act 35 of 2016)
- Streamlining government by reassigning the duties of Public Employees Retirement Commission (PERC) to the IFO and Auditor General. (Act 100 of 2016)
- Voting to reduce the size of the legislature through a constitutional amendment. (HB 153, passed both chambers this session, needs to pass again in the 2017-18 session.)
- Bringing openness to school budgets, SchoolWATCH requires the Pennsylvania Department of Education to post certain financial information on its website, including expenditures, salaries and revenue pertaining to school districts, charter schools, regional charter schools, cyber charter schools and area vocational-technical schools (Act 86 of 2016)
- Ensuring taxpayers know the true cost of state worker contracts by requiring the Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) to provide a cost

analysis of proposed collective bargaining agreements that are under the governor's jurisdiction. (Act 15 of 2016)

- Requiring state agencies to note when tax dollars are used for advertising by including a disclaimer on all ads. (Act 90 of 2015)
- Voting to reform the costly public pension systems to make them more viable into the future while preserving benefits and reducing taxpayers' ongoing liability for pension benefits, unfortunately, the far-reaching bill was vetoed by the governor. (SB 1)

### **Providing Efficient, Effective Government**

- Overhauling the Commonwealth's public school construction reimbursement process (PlanCon). (Act 25 of 2016)
- Increasing school choice options by allocating an additional \$25 million for the Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program. (Act 86 of 2016)
- Requiring the interception of income tax refunds of those who have outstanding restitution payments or court-ordered obligations. (Act 93 of 2016)
- Protecting high-performing teachers and prioritized schoolchildren by reforming the way in which teachers are furloughed, allowing high performing teachers to be retained. (HB 805, vetoed by the governor)
- Successfully pushed for Child Protective Services Law clarifications regarding the criminal background check clearance requirements and child abuse clearance requirements for volunteers who work with children. (Act 15 of 2015)
- Leading the call for a special legislative session on the opioid epidemic, setting the stage for significant legislation to address this statewide problem.



# LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Pennsylvania House of Representatives 200th Legislative Session (2015-16)

The General Fund	5
Fighting Opioid Abuse/Addiction	8
Supporting Private Sector Job Creation	9
Taxpayer Protection	11
Property Tax Reform	15
Education	16
Child Safety	20
Public Safety/Public Protection	22
Emergency Responders	26
Health Care and Health Care Access	27
Senior Citizens	30
Veterans	31
Sportsmen	32
Agriculture	33
Consumer Protection	34
Environmental Resources and Energy	36
Stronger Communities and Local Government	37
Transportation	39
Miscellaneous	41



# GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION THE STATE BUDGET

## **2015-16 General Fund Budget (HB 1192 – vetoed by the governor):**

Outlines the state spending plan for fiscal year 2015-16, increasing funding for education and public safety without any new or increased taxes.

## **Emergency Funding Bill (SB 1000 – vetoed by the governor):**

Provides four months' worth of emergency funding for schools, human services, nonprofit agencies and government operations.

### **Emergency Supplementals:**

- **Department of Corrections Appropriation (HB 1801):** to restore funding vetoed by the governor, this bill makes an emergency appropriation to the Department of Corrections for the state's correctional institutions for the 2015-16 fiscal year.
- **Child Advocacy Centers Appropriation (HB 1802):** to restore funding vetoed by the governor, this bill makes an emergency appropriation to the executive offices for Child Advocacy Centers for the 2015-16 fiscal year.
- **Hospital Burn Centers Appropriation (HB 1803):** to restore funding vetoed by the governor, this bill makes an emergency appropriation to the Department of Human Services for hospital burn centers for the 2015-16 fiscal year.

## **2015-16 General Fund Budget (Act 10A of 2015, formerly HB 1460):**

As sent to the governor, the budget had a total spend of \$30.3 billion, including a **\$405 million increase** for PreK-12 education. In total, this compromise budget increased spending by approximately 3.6 percent, compared to 2 percent inflationary growth. While signing the budget, Governor Wolf cut \$6.3 billion in funding for health care, schools, corrections and the legislature just because he didn't get his tax increases.

## **2015-16 General Fund Budget Supplemental (Act 1A of 2016, formerly**

**HB 1801):** Restored funding eliminated by the governor's line-item veto in December. Funding restored included Basic Education Funding (\$3.15 billion); correctional institutions (\$939.4 million); critical access hospitals, hospital-based burn centers and obstetric and neo-natal services (\$13.14 million); various disease-specific treatment, research and education programs (\$9.38 million); agriculture research programs (\$3.6 million); and Child Advocacy Centers (\$1 million). *The bill was not signed by the governor but was allowed to become law without his signature.*

**Administrative Code (Act 7 of 2016, formerly HB 941):** Makes several changes to the state's Administrative Code, including: reducing the licensing fee for distilleries of historical significance; making changes to the Citizens Advisory Council within the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); requiring the PA Gaming Control Board to conduct a study regarding the ability of the Commonwealth to regulate fantasy sports; and repealing the current Race Horse Industry Reform Act, and adding a new article to provide for the regulatory oversight of horse and harness racing.

**Human Services Code (Act 92 of 2015, formerly HB 1322):** Makes several changes to the state's Human Services Code, including: requiring applicants for general assistance to disclose previous states in which they have collected public assistance and requiring the Department of Human Services (DHS) to notify other states of the change in residency of the applicant; codifying the Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS) program; and changing the calculation for the child care subsidy to eliminate the child care benefits cliff.

**Fiscal Code Part II (Act 25 of 2016, formerly HB 1589):** Implementation language for the 2015-16 General Fund Budget. *The bill was not signed by the governor but was allowed to become law without his signature.*

**2016-17 General Fund Budget (Act 16A of 2016, formerly SB 1073):** A \$31.63 billion spending plan which makes key investments in public education, including \$200 million more (total of \$5.89 billion) in Basic Education Funding, \$20 million more for special education funding, \$25 million more for Pre-K Counts and \$5 million more for Head Start. Funding for higher education institutions and PHEAA increases by \$32.6 million. The budget also invests \$15 million in combatting opioid abuse and addiction, funds three new cadet classes for the Pennsylvania State Police and increases funding to serve 250 more people on the state's emergency waiting list for human services. The budget bill was not signed by the governor, but was allowed.

**2016-17 Non-Preferred Appropriations (HBs 2137-2141):** Provides the same level of funding as last year for the Pennsylvania State University, University of Pittsburgh, Temple University, Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania.

**2016-17 Human Services Code Bill (Act 76 of 2016, formerly HB 1062):** Makes several changes to the state's Human Services Code, in conjunction with the 2016-17 state budget. Changes include suspending (rather than terminating) medical assistance benefits for incarcerated persons; extending the annual assessment for nursing homes; moving the eHealth Partnership Program to the Department of Human Services (DHS); and repealing the requirement that county nursing homes pay 10



percent of the non-federal cost of services for Medicaid residents cared for in those facilities.

**2016-17 Tax Code Bill (Act 84 of 2016, formerly HB 1198):** Applies the state sales tax to digital downloads, including video, books, apps, games, music and more; caps the annual sales tax vendor discount at \$300; increases the bank shares tax; increases the cigarette tax by \$1 per pack; applies a tobacco products tax to e-cigarettes, smokeless tobacco and roll-your-own tobacco; increases the tax on table games by 2 percent; and creates a tax amnesty program.

**2016-17 Fiscal Code Bill (Act 85 of 2016, formerly HB 1605):** Outlines implementation of the 2016-17 state budget.

**2016-17 School Code Bill (Act 86 of 2016, formerly HB 1606):** Creates a new article in the School Code to ensure public online access to school-related funding and expenditures through the SchoolWATCH website and outlines the distribution of funds to school districts from the state's 2016-17 budget. The Educational Improvement Tax Credit increases \$25 million and prohibits the governor from withholding the program funds during a budget impasse.



# FIGHTING OPIOID ABUSE/ADDICTION

## *Working to Save Lives*

The House of Representatives stood together to urge the governor to call a special session on the opioid epidemic. The governor agreed and the House Majority Policy Committee has been leading by holding hearings throughout the Commonwealth in preparation.

**Coverage of Opioid-Deterrent Drugs (HB 1698 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires that insurance plans cover abuse-deterrent opioid analgesic drugs to help prevent addiction.

**Opioid Prescriptions (HB 1699 – awaiting Senate action):** Prohibits a health care practitioner from prescribing more than seven days of an opioid drug product in a hospital emergency department or urgent care facility unless certain medical conditions warrant more than a seven-day supply.

**Reduce Prescription Drug Abuse (HB 1737 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows prescription drug and pharmaceutical waste to be destroyed and disposed of through waste-to-energy facilities in an effort to reduce prescription drug abuse and ensure the safety of the state's drinking water.

**Prescriber Licensing (HB 1805 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires dispensers or prescribers who are applying for or renewing a license or certification to have met a certain number of approved education classes which address pain management, addiction and prescribing and dispensing practices for opioids.

**Addiction Treatment Access (HR 590 – passed House):** Urges the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs to establish and administer a task force on access to addiction treatment through health plans and other resources.



# SUPPORTING PRIVATE SECTOR JOB CREATION

## *Making PA Open For Business*

**First Industries Program (Act 81 of 2015, formerly SB 756):** Eliminates the sunset provision which had provided that, after July 15, 2015, no Farm Credit Institution under the Farm Credit Act of 1971 would be eligible for any loan guarantee under the First Industries Program. The program provides financial assistance, through planning and predevelopment grants and loan guarantees, for projects related to tourism and agriculture.

**Wine and Spirit Privatization (HB 466 – vetoed by the governor):** Transfers both wholesale and retail sales of wine and liquor to the private sector. The proposal allows at least 1,200 wine and spirits licenses to be offered first to existing beer distributors and then to the public. To enhance consumer convenience, it creates grocery store wine licenses and wine-to-go permits and allows beer distributors to sell growlers, six-packs or 12-packs, rather than only cases. To ensure alcohol does not fall into the hands of those who shouldn't have it, the bill requires training for retailers and age compliance checks. Finally, it helps displaced state store workers by offering them financial help to pursue education and training, and providing them with points on their civil service exam to assist them in their search for a new job.

**ABC and Wine Privatization (Act 39 of 2016, formerly HB 1690):** The Adult Beverage Convenience and Wine Privatization Act offers consumers more choice and convenience in the way they may purchase alcoholic beverages in Pennsylvania. The law allows for the sale of both wine and beer in grocery stores, convenience stores and six-pack shops; expanded Sunday and holiday hours in state stores; direct shipment of wine; and flexible pricing. The legislation is expected to generate up to \$150 million in new state revenue through licensing and other fees.

**Out-of-State Wine and Liquor Sales (HB 757 – awaiting Senate action):** Acknowledging it's time to end the practice of turning Pennsylvanians into illegal bootleggers, this legislation decriminalizes the purchase of out-of-state wine and liquor, thus ending the crime of buying better-priced wine and spirits.

**Direct Shipment of Wine (HB 189 – included as part of Act 39 of 2016):** Expands the direct shipment of wine to allow any winery (in state or out of state) to obtain a permit and ship any quantity of wine to the consumer for their personal consumption.

**Commerce Courts (HB 323 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows establishment of a "commerce court" program within the Superior Court to decide business-related appeals and authorizes the creation of similar "commerce court" programs within the Courts of Common Pleas.

**CareerBound Pilot Program (HB 725 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes a pilot education/workforce development program known as CareerBound. The program would be designed to empower local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), school partners, and business partners to collaborate to develop innovative school-to-work pilot programs to help students make career decisions and help businesses ensure a work force prepared for high-priority occupations in the future.

**Buy American (HB 743 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires all Commonwealth agencies and the General Assembly to procure only American and Pennsylvania flags which are manufactured in the United States.

**Second Stage Loan Program (HB 810 – awaiting Senate action):** Modernizes and streamlines Pennsylvania’s Second Stage Loan Program, which provides loan guarantees to commercial lending institutions that make loans to life sciences, advanced technology or manufacturing businesses located in Pennsylvania.

**Modernizing Business Laws (HB 1398 – awaiting Senate action):** Modernizes the law on limited liability partnerships, general partnerships, limited partnerships and limited liability companies.

**Diverse Businesses (HB 1653 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes a process for the recognition of Pennsylvania-based diverse businesses by the Department of General Services.



# TAXPAYER PROTECTION

## *Responsible Stewardship of Your Money*

From increasing public transparency to making records easier access or making government decisions in a more open atmosphere, to strengthening accountability, House Republicans are out front, fighting for change.

**Legislative Reductions (HB 153 – approved by the Senate; HB 384 – awaiting Senate action):** House Bill 153 proposes to reduce the size of the House of Representatives from 203 to 151 legislative districts. House Bill 384 proposes to reduce the size of the Senate of Pennsylvania from 50 to 37 senatorial districts. Both measures require a constitutional amendment, which means the legislation must be approved in two consecutive legislative sessions and then be put before the voters.

**Taxpayer-Paid Advertisements (Act 90 of 2015, formerly SB 442):** Requires all Commonwealth agencies to note when tax monies are used for advertising with the statement: “Paid for with Pennsylvania taxpayer dollars.”

**Downsizing Government (Act 100 of 2016, formerly SB 1227):** Amends the Administrative Code to reassign the duties of the Public Employee Retirement Commission to the Independent Fiscal Office and the Auditor General.

**Smoothing the Child Care Benefits Cliff (HB 1164 – amended in to 2015-16 Human Services Code/Act 92 of 2015):** Amends the Public Welfare Code to require the child care copayment to be calculated based on a percentage of the adjusted gross income of a family and provide incentives for those receiving the subsidy to engage in more wage-earning work hours.

**Pension Reform (SB 1 – vetoed by the governor):** Establishes a hybrid 401(k)-style/cash balance retirement benefit plan for future state and school employees.

**SchoolWATCH (Act 86 of 2016, formerly HB 1606):** Passed as part of the 2016-17 School Code Bill, it creates a new article in the School Code to ensure public online access to school-related funding and expenditures through the SchoolWATCH website and outlines the distribution of funds to school districts from the state’s 2016-17 budget. The type of information the new law requires the state Department of Education to post includes expenditures, salaries and revenue pertaining to school districts, charter schools, regional charter schools, cyber charter schools and area vocational-technical schools. *The legislation was originally drafted as HB 224, but it was vetoed by the governor.*

**Collective Bargaining Agreement Review (Act 15 of 2016, formerly SB 644):** Requires the Independent Fiscal Office to provide a cost analysis of proposed collective bargaining agreements that are under the jurisdiction of the governor.

**Eliminating Turnpike Call Box Mandate (Act 77 of 2016, formerly HB 1335):** Removes the requirement that the PA Turnpike Commission (PTC) has to provide for the installation and maintenance of emergency telephones along the PA Turnpike every two miles on both sides of the highway.

**Lean Government (HB 11 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes the Lean Government Practices Program within the Governor’s Office of Transformation to provide training to new state employees in using lean government practices.

**Legislative Nonprofits Banned (HB 14 – awaiting Senate action):** Prohibits members of the General Assembly from creating or maintaining legislative nonprofit organizations.

**Pension Forfeiture (HB 17 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires pension forfeiture if a public employee or public official is convicted or pleads guilty or no contest to any felony offense in addition to those crimes already listed in the Public Employee Pension Forfeiture Act.

**Increasing Transparency, Municipal Authority Acquisitions (HB 66 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires a municipal authority to publicly discuss all acquisitions and the sale or transfer of authority-owned water and sewer infrastructure and how the acquisition or sale will provide a public benefit to the authority’s current ratepayers.

**Lottery Winnings Intercept (HB 251 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the State Lottery Law to allow for a Pennsylvania lottery winnings intercept for state delinquent taxes and outstanding court costs, and requires a determination as to whether a winner receiving public assistance remains eligible.

**Unemployment Compensation Proceedings (HB 319 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires that the testimony at any hearing before an Unemployment Compensation referee be taken by both a reporter and by recording device, and that an unabridged transcript and audio recording of the testimony be made available, at cost, to any party upon written request and extends this requirement to appeals heard by the Unemployment Compensation Board of Review.

**Property Tax Assistance for Seniors (HB 791 – awaiting Senate action):** Authorizes school districts to implement programs in which senior citizens may volunteer in the school district in which they reside and receive a real school property tax credit in exchange for their services.

**Cost of Executive Orders? Understanding Fiscal Impacts (HB 826 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires the Independent Fiscal Office to prepare a fiscal impact statement of general and permanent executive orders issued by the governor.

**Public Debt Reductions: Capital Facilities Debt Enabling Act Changes (HBs 928 and 930 – awaiting Senate action):** House Bill 928 reduces the maximum amount of outstanding obligations for redevelopment assistance projects by \$50 million annually (starting July 1, 2018) until the sum of the outstanding obligations for Redevelopment Assistance Capital Projects (RACP) equals \$2.95 billion. House Bill 930 establishes an annual spending limit of \$125 million on RACP and \$350 million on Public Improvement Projects.

**Regulatory Process Oversight (HB 965 – awaiting Senate action):** Outlines opportunities for participation in the regulatory review process by legislative standing committees and individual committee members, and extends the time period for committee action related to an agency regulation.

**Inheritance Tax Changes (HB 971 – awaiting Senate action):** Eliminates Pennsylvania's inheritance tax for property transfers from a natural parent, adoptive parent or step-parent to or for the use of their child, if the child is 21 years of age or younger.

**Public Pension Reform (SB 1071 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes a hybrid retirement benefit plan, containing defined benefit and defined contribution components, for future state and public school employees.

**Independent Counsel Law (HB 1118 – awaiting Senate action):** Re-enacts Pennsylvania's independent counsel law.

**School Pension Eligibility (HB 1084 – awaiting Senate action):** Removes future employees of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association from being eligible for public pension benefits in the Public School Employees Retirement System.

**Results First (HB 1205 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes the Results First Act for data collection and cost-benefit analyses by the Independent Fiscal Office.

**Closing Assistance Loophole (HB 1322 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires applicants for general assistance to disclose previous states in which they have resided and collected public assistance in the last five years and requires the Department of Human Services to notify other states of the change in residency of the applicant.

**Increased Penalties for Lobbyist Violations (HB 1348 – awaiting Senate action):** Increases penalties that may be imposed on lobbyists or principals for violations of the Lobbyist Disclosure Law.

**Office of Inspector General (HB 1618 – awaiting Senate action):** Creates the independent Office of State Inspector General.





# PROPERTY TAX REFORM

In many areas of Pennsylvania, some people have been forced to choose between paying their taxes, or buying food and medicine, and House Republicans understand it shouldn't be that way. Our Caucus is out front, fighting to bring fairness in how the state funds public education. The new Basic Education Funding Formula is a major step, but there remains a property tax issue still.

**Property Tax Relief (HB 504 – awaiting Senate action):** Provides reductions in school property taxes in exchange for increasing the Personal Income Tax rate to 3.7 percent and the sales tax rate to 7 percent (sales tax would be applied only to those items currently subject to the tax). The plan would generate nearly \$5 billion in total relief and would include a \$125 million expansion of the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program, which benefits low- to middle-income senior citizens and disabled residents with disabilities across the state.

**Homestead Exclusions (HB 147 – passed both House and Senate, needs to pass again in 2017-18 Legislation Session):** Amends the state Constitution to allow local taxing authorities to exclude from taxation up to 100 percent of the assessed value of the homestead property receiving the exclusion.



# EDUCATION

## *Building Educational Opportunity*

**2015 Education Code (HB 762 – vetoed by the governor):** Authorizes the Pennsylvania Department of Education to enter into an interstate reciprocity agreement governing interstate offerings of postsecondary distance education courses and programs, and outlines the 2015 omnibus School Code.

**Ready to Succeed Scholarship (Act 33 of 2015, formerly SB 329):** Establishes the Ready to Succeed Scholarship Program administered by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency. The program provides awards to high-achieving students with a minimum 3.25 G.P.A. and whose annual family income does not exceed \$110,000.

**Keystone Exam Delay (Act 1 of 2016, formerly SB 880):** Delays implementation of the Keystone Exam as a graduation requirement until the 2018-19 school year and requires the Pennsylvania Department of Education to investigate alternatives to the Keystone Exam.

**Schedule Flexibility (Act 4 of 2016, formerly HB 158):** Allows the Secretary of Education to issue weather-related, safety-related and health-related emergency declarations under which school entities shall be given flexibility to satisfy the 180 instructional days per school year requirement.

**Work Experience for Students with Disabilities (Act 26 of 2016, formerly HB 400):** Establishes the “Work Experience for High School Students with Disabilities” Act, which requires the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in the Department of Labor and Industry to develop connections between local education agencies and employers to promote the successful transition from school to competitive, gainful employment.

**Distance Education Courses (Act 35 of 2016, formerly HB 1552):** Implements the Basic Education Funding Commission formula for distributing funding to school districts. The bill also authorizes the Pennsylvania Department of Education to enter into an interstate reciprocity agreement governing interstate offerings of postsecondary distance education courses and programs to promote the expansion of this type of educational opportunity while reducing costs related to the approval of these programs for our state’s institutions of higher education.

**Act 86 of 2016** includes several changes that are beneficial to schools, students and teachers they include:

- o **EITC/OSTC Program Expansion (HB752):** Parents and students have different education goals and expectations which can be fulfilled through traditional public schools, public charter schools or private

K-12 education. Bureaucracy should not be the only determining factor when deciding where to fulfill a child's educational needs. This act expands school choice opportunities and innovative school programs by increasing the amount of available tax credits for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program by \$25 million and makes administrative changes which secure the program and hope to correct the delay in approval that occurred in 2015.

- o **SchoolWATCH (HB1606):** Helping citizens gain access to school expenditures, this act requires the Pennsylvania Department of Education to continue to post financial information on its website, including expenditures, salaries and revenue pertaining to school districts, charter schools, regional charter schools, cyber charter schools and area vocational-technical schools.
- o **E-chievement for Hybrid Learning (HB 1578):** Creates the "E-chievement" Program to be administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to award grants to school entities for the planning and implementation of hybrid learning.

**Use of Audio on School Buses (Act 56 of 2016, formerly SB 1077):**

Removes the requirement that school districts send written communication to parents about the use of audio on school buses, as long as the policy is included in a student handbook or publication of school rules, procedures and standards of conduct, and the notice of the policy is also published on the school's website.

**Teacher and School Accountability: Economic Furloughs, Teacher Tenure and Performance Rating Reforms (HB 805 – vetoed by the governor):** Amends the Public School Code to provide for tenure after five years of service and a distinguished or proficient rating on two most recent performance evaluations; allows suspension of professional employees for economic reasons; requires suspensions to be based upon performance ratings with seniority as the basis in the case of employees with the same rating; and requires that a professional employee aggrieved by a school board action file an appeal with the Secretary of Education within 15 days.

**Military Recruiting in Schools (HB 127 – awaiting Senate action):** Brings the state statute regarding military recruiter access to school students into alignment with the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

**Defining Online Schools (HB 139 – awaiting Senate action):** In response to advancing technologies, defines an "online school," amends the definition of a "private academic school" to include online schools, and permits the licensure of online schools.

**Parenting Education (HB 141 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires a parent, guardian or person in parental relation to attend a parenting education program or perform community service for failure to comply with compulsory school attendance requirements.

**Teacher Education/Certification (HB 499 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires a teacher preparation program to recommend applicants for certification who meet certain grade point average standards and prohibits teacher preparation programs from requiring education students to obtain a passing score on certain assessments in order to graduate and from including a student's scores on these assessments as a component of a student's course grade.

**College Credit Standards (HB 512 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the Public School Code to provide uniform standards for awarding college credit for prior learning at public institutions of higher education.

**Charter School Reform (HB 530 – amended in the Senate, building consensus):** Overhauls the charter school law including making changes to the formula for funding cyber charter schools, creates a funding commission to make recommendations concerning funding and other matters related to charter schools, and makes other needed updates to the state's charter school law.

**Computer Science Credits (HB 833 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires school districts to allow students to apply credits earned through courses in computer science or information technology to satisfy graduation credit requirements in either mathematics or science.

**Financial Literacy (HB 837 – awaiting Senate action):** Authorizes and regulates savings promotion raffles offered by banks or credit unions in Pennsylvania to encourage savings and responsible money management.

**KEYS Program Reform (HB 934 – amended into 2015-16 Human Services Code/Act 92 of 2015):** Codifies the Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS) program. KEYS offers career counseling, tutoring and academic supports to parents who are eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and who are enrolled in a degree program at one of the 14 community colleges in Pennsylvania, a career or technical school registered with the Department of Education, or a state university. Individuals who are enrolled in the KEYS program would be permitted to count their education, including class and study time as set by the school, towards their "core TANF work requirement" for a period of 24 months.

**Substitute Teachers (HB 1039 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows public school entities to employ uncertified individuals as substitute teachers in the event certified substitutes teachers are unavailable.

**Data Collection Requirement Review (HB 1112 – awaiting Senate action):**

Requires the State Board of Education to establish an advisory committee for the purpose of identifying and issuing a report regarding redundant, overly burdensome or unnecessary public school entity data collection requirements.

**The National Motto, “In God We Trust” (HB 1640 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows school entities in the Commonwealth to display the national motto, “In God We Trust,” and the Bill of Rights in each school building.

**Drug and Alcohol Recovery High School (HB 1827 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes the Drug and Alcohol Recovery High School Pilot Program for students in recovery from substance abuse.

**Transition Services Training (HB 1834 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires that professional educators providing secondary transition services to special education students in grades eight through 12 or who are 14 years of age or older must complete training developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education within two months of assuming their duties and complete the training again every five years.

**Truancy Changes (HB 1907 – awaiting Senate action):** Extensively revises truancy provisions contained in the Public School Code, including definitions, procedures and penalties.

**Repository of Online Courses (HB 1915 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires the Pennsylvania Department of Education to establish a central repository of online courses accessible to school entities, nonpublic schools, home education programs and the general public.

**Teacher Certification for Military Personnel (HB 2078 – awaiting Senate action):** Expedites the educator certification processing time and limits administrative fees for individuals who serve or have served in the United States Armed Forces and their spouses, and allows educators with inactive Pennsylvania certification to return to Pennsylvania and have their certification quickly returned to active status.

**Carryover Credits (HB 2082 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows a professional educator to carry over excess continuing professional education credits or hours into the next compliance period.



# CHILD SAFETY

## *Protecting Children, Ensuring Justice*

**Child Protective Services Law Clarifications (Act 15 of 2015, formerly HB 1276):** Clarifies certain provisions in the Child Protective Services Law regarding the criminal background check clearance requirements and child abuse clearance requirements for volunteers who work with children. This was a follow-up to the landmark child protection legislation from the 2013-14 legislative session.

**Protecting Against Cyber Bullying (Act 26 of 2015, formerly HB 229):** Establishes the offense of cyber harassment of a child and makes it a third-degree misdemeanor.

**Interstate Family Support Act (Act 94 of 2015, formerly HB 1603):** Brings Pennsylvania into compliance with changes that have been made to the federal Uniform Interstate Family Support Act.

**Day Care Inspections (HB 46 – awaiting Senate action):** Authorizes the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services to conduct unannounced inspections of child day care facilities.

**Child Endangerment (HB 74 – awaiting Senate action):** Increases the grading of offenses relating to endangering the welfare of children to reflect the degree of risk and the age of the child victim.

**Child Abuse Information (HB 124 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires that courts have a complete record regarding whether a child subject to a proceeding has been abused or is the subject of a child abuse investigation.

**Parental Rights and Rape (HB 410 – awaiting Senate action):** In cases where a child is conceived as a result of a rape, requires that courts not grant custody to the rapist if the victim objects. The measure also would maintain the rapist's obligation to pay child support even if his parental rights are terminated.

**Concealing the Death of a Child (HB 424 – awaiting Senate action):** Increases the grading for the offense of a parent concealing the death of his or her child from a first-degree misdemeanor to a third-degree felony, increases the maximum penalty to seven years and/or a fine up to \$15,000, and clarifies the definition of parent and persons who can be charged with the offense.

**Newborn Screening (HB 498 – awaiting Senate action):** Adds Nonketotic Hyperglycinemia (NKH) to the list of disorders for newborn screening.

**No ARD for Sex Offenses (HB 623 – awaiting Senate action):** Prohibits the use of Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition for certain sex offenses against children.

**Child Protective Services Clarifications and Updates (SB 1156 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires that health care personnel and members of the clergy who have direct and routine contact with children or who are responsible for a child’s welfare obtain specific criminal background check clearances and a child abuse clearance, and also extends the time period for which valid General Protective Service reports are retained in the Department of Human Services’ statewide database.

**Statute of Limitations Extended (HB 1947 – amended in the Senate, currently in House Rules Committee):** Amends the Judicial Code regarding civil and criminal statute of limitations for child sexual abuse and provides for waivers of sovereign and governmental immunity relating to claims of childhood sexual abuse.



# PUBLIC SAFETY/PUBLIC PROTECTION

## *Always a Priority*

**Impersonating a Doctor (Act 10 of 2015, formerly SB 485):** Increases the criminal grading for a person who impersonates a doctor of medicine and provides medical treatment from a second-degree misdemeanor to a first-degree misdemeanor.

**911 Updates (Act 12 of 2015, formerly HB 911 and Act 30 of 2016, formerly HB 1310):** Updates and enhances Pennsylvania's 911 emergency communications law. Act 30 prohibits 911 centers from releasing certain identifying information regarding a 911 caller.

**Counseling Services for Sex Offenders (Act 20 of 2015, formerly HB 73):** Requires that a provider of counseling services notify the district attorney and law enforcement in the municipality in which the counseling center is located if it is providing services to sexually violent predators.

**Mental Health Awareness Training (Act 25 of 2015, formerly HB 221):** Requires that municipal police officers and magisterial district judges receive training in the identification and recognition of those suffering from mental health conditions or intellectual disabilities.

**Sex Assault Evidence Reporting (Act 27 of 2015, formerly HB 272):** Mandates timeframes and technical requirements for the submission and reporting of sexual assault evidence to assure sexual assault perpetrators are brought to justice with expediency and efficiency.

**Substance Abuse Treatment Grant Pilot Program (Act 80 of 2015, formerly SB 524):** Creates a pilot program within the Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide grants to county correctional facilities with respect to treatment of inmates for drug or alcohol addiction. Specifically, grants will be used to provide long-acting, non-narcotic, non-addictive medication to eligible offenders upon release from the county facility. The aim of the non-narcotic, non-addictive medication is to prevent the relapse of the inmate's opiate or alcohol addiction.

**Criminal Records Information (Act 5 of 2016, formerly SB 166):** Amends the Crimes Code concerning orders for limited access to criminal records and amends the Judicial Code concerning petitions for expungement or orders for limited access fees.

**Domestic Violence and Divorce (Act 24 of 2016, formerly HB 12):** Protects victims of domestic violence seeking divorce by enabling someone whose spouse had been convicted of certain personal injury crimes against



him or her to use that crime as grounds for divorce and for the divorce to occur in 90 days. The bill also prevents judges from ordering counseling if an abused spouse had a protection from abuse order or had been the victim of a personal injury crime by the other spouse.

**Anti-Hazing Law Enhancement (Act 31 of 2016, formerly HB 1574):** Expands Pennsylvania's anti-hazing law to make hazing an offense if done to any person as a condition for initiation or admission into any organization and requires public and private secondary schools to enact anti-hazing policies.

**Ignition Interlock Expansion (Act 33 of 2016, formerly SB 290):** Establishes an "ignition interlock limited license" and expands the ignition interlock requirement for first-time DUI offenders, addresses chemical tests to determine blood alcohol level, further restricts issuance of occupational limited licenses and clarifies the calculation of prior offenses.

**Pennsylvania Officer Down Advisory Act (HB 97 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes the Pennsylvania Officer Down Advisory Act to assist, by prompt notification to the public, in the apprehension of those suspected of causing serious injury or death to a law enforcement officer.

**Tax Intercept for Restitution (Act 93 of 2016, formerly House Bill 1167):** Requires Pennsylvania income tax refunds to be intercepted by the Department of Revenue to satisfy a filer's outstanding required restitution payments or other court-ordered obligations.

**Ensuring Restitution Payments (HBs 123, 758, 1070 and 1089 – awaiting Senate action):** Aiming to ensure restitution payments are made to crime victims, the bills make the following changes. House Bill 123 requires that any money posted as bail, which would otherwise be returnable, shall first be applied to the payment of any outstanding restitution, fees, fines or costs owed by the defendant in any criminal or delinquency case. House Bill 758 authorizes voluntary, automatic, periodic withdrawals from a banking account for the satisfaction of restitution, costs and fines; and authorizes involuntary wage attachment for payment of the same. House Bill 1070 requires each county to establish an internal unit dedicated to the collection of restitution, fines, fees and other court-imposed obligations unless the county chooses to outsource collections. House Bill 1089 requires that correctional facilities make minimum deductions from the wages and personal accounts of inmates who have outstanding restitution or other court-ordered obligations.

**Trafficking of Infants (HB 185 – awaiting Senate action):** Increases the penalty for the offense of trafficking of infants to a first-degree felony.

**Enhancing Victims' Rights (HB 186 – awaiting Senate action):** Clarifies a victim's right to be present during trial proceedings.

**Protecting Against Neglect (HB 215 – awaiting Senate action):** Broadens the definition of the offense of neglect of a care-dependent person and creates the offense of abuse of a care-dependent person.

**Drug Crimes and Public Assistance (HB 222 – awaiting Senate action):** Prohibits individuals convicted of drug distribution crimes from receiving certain public assistance benefits.

**Impersonating a Law Enforcement Officer (HB 235 – awaiting Senate action):** Increases the grading of the offense of impersonating a law enforcement officer from a second-degree misdemeanor to a third-degree felony and imposes penalties for the sale of emergency vehicles equipped with flashing lights or audible warning systems.

**Spoofing (HB 391 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes a misdemeanor offense for any person who causes false caller identification information to be displayed on a recipient's telephone with the intent to harass or defraud the call recipient.

**Mandatory Penalties for Sex Offenders (HB 446 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires the court to impose a mandatory three-year probation period consecutive to and in addition to any other lawful sentence imposed by the court for a person convicted of a Tier III sex offense under Pennsylvania's Adam Walsh Act.

**Online Impersonation (HB 656 – awaiting Senate action):** Creates a sentencing enhancement for certain offenses committed while impersonating a person online with malicious intent.

**Texting Penalties (HB 853 – awaiting Senate action):** Increases the penalties for using text-based communication while driving and an accident occurs causing severe injury or death.

**Drones and Privacy (HB 1339 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the Crimes Code by adding a new section to impose criminal penalties on invasions of privacy by remote control helicopters and aircraft (often referred to as "drones") that are equipped with video cameras.

**Repeat DUI Offenders (HB 1353 – awaiting Senate action):** Raises the grading of vehicular homicide while driving under the influence and increases the mandatory sentence if the defendant has been previously convicted of driving under the influence or a felony traffic offense.

**Possession of Firearms (HBs 1496 and 1497 – awaiting Senate action):** Increases penalties for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and enhances penalties for prohibited possession of a firearm by a person adjudicated of a felony offense as a juvenile.

**NICS Requirements (HB 1498 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires the Pennsylvania State Police to send all existing mental health data within 90 days to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).

**Law Enforcement Involved Shooting (HB 1538 – awaiting Senate action):** Prohibits the release of the name and identifying information of a law enforcement officer involved in a firearm discharge or use of force while an investigation is in progress.

**Strangulation (HB 1581 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes the crime of strangulation with felony grading. Addresses a loophole used by perpetrators of romantic violence.

**Mandatory Minimum Sentencing (HB 1601 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the Crimes Code and Judicial Code to fix constitutional defects concerning mandatory minimum sentencing and drug trafficking penalties.

**Juror Information (HB 1626 – awaiting Senate action):** Prohibits the release or disclosure of the addresses of jurors after they have been empaneled for the trial of a case, unless otherwise ordered by the court.

**Mandatory Minimum Sentencing for Firearms Offenses (HB 1632 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the Judicial Code regarding mandatory minimum sentences for offenses committed with firearms and sentences for certain drug offenses committed with firearms.

**Sex Trafficking Laws (HB 1691 – awaiting Senate action):** Updates state law to bring Pennsylvania into compliance with the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act.

**Murder of an Unborn Child (HB 1799 – awaiting Senate consideration):** Clarifies that a conviction of third-degree murder of an unborn child requires imposition of a mandatory life sentence.



# EMERGENCY RESPONDERS

**Death Benefit Updates (Act 1 of 2015, formerly HB 152) and:** Extends the filing period for the death benefit from 90 days to four years and adds campus police officers to the list of law enforcement officers eligible for the benefit (Act 1 of 2015).

**Emergency Responders in Work Zones (Act 70 of 2015, formerly SB 887):** Establishes penalties for endangerment, aggravated endangerment or death of a highway worker, emergency responder or others in work zones.

**Fire, EMS Grant Program Extended (Act 60 of 2016, formerly HB 1877):** Re-authorizes and enhances the Fire Companies and Emergency Medical Services grant program. Career ambulance companies will now be eligible to apply for grants, so long as they are designated as a municipality's primary EMS provider.

**PEMA Confirmation (SB 490 – vetoed by the governor):** Requires Senate of Pennsylvania to confirm the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency director.

**Benefits to Fire Chiefs (HB 1988 -- awaiting Senate action):** Extends benefits to fire chiefs and heads of fire departments who have been removed from bargaining units by the PA Labor Relations Board under the Police and Firefighter Collective Bargaining Law.

**Heart and Lung Act (HB 2148 -- awaiting Senate action):** Extends the coverage of benefits under the Heart and Lung Act to include certain individuals employed by the Commonwealth as firefighters.



# HEALTH CARE AND HEALTH CARE ACCESS

**Health Care Navigators (Act 7 of 2015, formerly SB 293):** Establishes a state registration process with the Pennsylvania Insurance Department to clarify the proper role of navigators and assisters who enroll individuals in health insurance exchanges.

**Flu Vaccine Access (Act 8 of 2015, formerly HB 182):** Allows authorized pharmacists to administer flu immunizations to children 9 years of age and older with parental consent and allows qualified pharmacy interns to administer injections under supervision of an authorized pharmacist.

**Pharmacy Registration (Act 43 of 2015, formerly HB 75):** Requires pharmacies located outside Pennsylvania to register with the State Board of Pharmacy if they fill prescription orders for residents of the Commonwealth.

**Dental Licensing and Training (Act 60 of 2015, formerly HB 1275):** Allows dentists from other states and countries to attend continuing education courses taught in dental schools located in the Commonwealth and allows licensed dentists from other countries to obtain restricted faculty licenses authorizing them to teach in Pennsylvania dental schools.

**CHIP (Act 84 of 2015, formerly HB 857):** Reauthorizes the Pennsylvania Children's Health Insurance Program through Dec. 31, 2017, and moves the program from the Insurance Department to the Department of Human Services.

**Medical Cannabis (Act 16 of 2016, formerly SB 3):** Permits the growing, processing and dispensing of medical cannabis to qualified patients in Pennsylvania. The following diseases qualify for the use of medical cannabis: cancer, epilepsy, intractable seizures, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), HIV/AIDS, glaucoma, severe chronic or intractable pain of neuropathic origin or severe or intractable pain in which conventional therapeutic intervention and opiate therapy is contraindicated or ineffective, damage to the nervous tissue of the spinal cord with objective neurological indicated of intractable spasticity, inflammatory bowel disease (IBS), neuropathies, sickle cell anemia and Huntington's disease.

**Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act (Act 17 of 2016, formerly SB 879):** Allows a tax-free savings account to be established for use by an individual with disabilities to cover qualified expenses such as education, housing and transportation. The new law allows family members and other persons to make contributions during a taxable year for a designated beneficiary to supplement the costs of qualified disability expenses.

**Fighting Drug Abuse (Act 37 of 2016, formerly HB 608):** Allows the Department of Health to promptly add chemicals used to manufacture illegal drugs to the list of “precursor substances” under the Drug Act.

**Coverage for Oral Cancer Treatments (Act 73 of 2016, formerly HB 60):** Makes oral anti-cancer medications more affordable and creates parity between oral and intravenous cancer medications.

**Suicide Prevention Education (Act 74 of 2016, formerly HB 64):** Requires the State Board of Psychology and the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors to have at least one hour of continuing education in the assessment, treatment and management of suicide risks.

**HepC Screening (Act 87 of 2016, formerly HB 59):** Requires health care providers and hospitals to offer screening tests and treatment for hepatitis C to those born between 1945 and 1965.

**Biologic Medications (Act 95 of 2016, formerly SB 514):** Amends the Generic Equivalent Drug Law to provide for the substitution of an interchangeable biological product for a brand name biologic.

**Consent to Mental Health Treatment (HB 337 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires the Department of Human Services to issue guidelines and adopt rules and regulations regarding a minor’s right to consent to mental health treatment.

**Keeping Up With Illegal Drugs (HB 608 – awaiting Senate action):** Empowers the Department of Health to ban substances known to be used for the manufacture of illegal drugs. The bill also makes changes to the current schedule of controlled substances to reflect federal law.

**Pharmacy Technician Registration (HB 854 – awaiting Senate consideration):** Requires pharmacy technicians to register with the State Board of Pharmacy.

**Health Insurance for Kids (HB 875 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires the non-custodial parent of children for whom Medical Assistance is sought to enroll the children in their own health insurance plan before the Commonwealth will pay for care.

**Right-to-Try Treatment Options (HB 1104 – awaiting Senate action):** Permits eligible patients with terminal illnesses to use investigational drugs, biological products and devices not yet approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

**Clinical Social Work (HB 1415 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires individuals who engage in the independent practice of clinical social work to be licensed clinical social workers.

**Abortion Control Act (HB 1948 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the Abortion Control Act regarding abortion regulations, including changing the upper limit of when an elective abortion is available and prohibiting the practice of dismemberment abortions.

**Paramedic Blood Draws (HB 2058 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows paramedics to conduct blood draws on behalf of municipal police departments in alleged driving under the influence (DUI) cases.



# SENIOR CITIZENS

**PACE/PACENET Eligibility (Act 91 of 2015, formerly HB 777, and HBs 190 and 493 – awaiting Senate action):** Excludes from the definition of income for PACE and PACENET eligibility the principal and any interest accrued from a savings bond (HB 190) and veterans' benefits (HB 493). House Bill 777 extends a moratorium on increases in income due to a Social Security cost-of-living adjustment.

**Expanding Prescription Drug Assistance (HB 2069 – awaiting Senate action):** Expands PACENET eligibility to include an additional 32,000 Pennsylvanians. The bill also rebalances reimbursement formulas for pharmacies and changes the Pharmaceutical Assistance Review Board to an advisory board with additional membership and enhanced duties.

**Financial Exploitation Awareness (HB 271 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General to establish ongoing communication with the Pennsylvania Department of Aging in an effort to further identify potential patterns of financial exploitation of seniors.

**Vehicle Registration Discount Expansion (HB 582 – awaiting Senate action):** Increases the annual income limit for retired persons receiving Social Security or other pension to qualify for the discounted \$10 vehicle registration fee.

**Long-Term Care Council (Act 64 of 2015, formerly HB 753):** Creates the Pennsylvania Long-Term Care Council under the Pennsylvania Department of Aging to help address all areas of long-term care, including institutional care and home-based and community-based services. The council would address issues pertaining to regulatory review and access to care; community access and public education; long-term care services models and delivery; and workforce.

**Property Tax/Rent Rebate (HB 1162 – awaiting Senate action):** Excludes 50 percent of substitute social security pension benefits from income for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program for calendar years 2015 and thereafter.

**Older Adults Protective Services Act (HB 1210 – awaiting Senate action):** Broadens the definition of "exploitation" under the Older Adults Protective Services Act to include an individual acting under a power of attorney.





# VETERANS

**Tuition for Veterans (Act 11 of 2015, formerly HB 131):** Provides in-state tuition rates at community colleges and state-related/state-owned institutions of higher learning for veterans, their spouses and dependent children.

**Falsifying Veteran Status (Act 32 of 2015, formerly SB 42):** Establishes a penalty for a person who falsely claims veteran status on a driver's license or identification card.

**Exempting Military Compensation (Act 6 of 2016, formerly HB 561):** Amends the Local Tax Enabling Act to exempt wages or compensation paid to individuals on active military service from the earned income tax, regardless of whether it is earned for service inside or outside the Commonwealth.

**State Veterans' Commission (Act 42 of 2016, formerly SB 847):** Adds the Korean War Veterans Association Inc. as a voting member organization of the State Veterans' Commission.

**Veterans Preference Notification (HB 192 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires notification of the Veterans Preference law on the Civil Service Commission website and on all Civil Service Commission announcements, advertisements and exam.

**Business Fee Exemption (HB 1600 – awaiting Senate action):** Exempts a veteran-owned small business from paying a business fee.

**Service Medals (HB 1727 – awaiting Senate action):** Creates and adds the Pennsylvania Medal of Achievement and the Pennsylvania Veterans Service Award to the list of existing medals, badges and awards that are authorized and presented by the governor in the name of the Commonwealth.

**Stolen Valor (HB 2050 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes the crime of fraudulently presenting oneself as a soldier or a veteran of any branch of the armed forces, or as the recipient of a service medal or other military decoration, when it is done with the intention of obtaining money, property or other benefits.



# SPORTSMEN

**Hunting Dog Training (Act 65 of 2015, formerly SB 77):** Makes several changes to permit requirements for hunting dog training areas.

**Hunters With Disabilities (Act 76 of 2015, formerly HB 698):** Allows individuals with disabilities who are permanently confined to a wheelchair to use a motorized wheelchair while hunting and creates a related permit.

**Weapons Allowed for Hunting (HB 263 – awaiting Senate action):** Removes the prohibition on hunting with an air, chemical or gas cylinder powered weapon.

**Constitutional Rights (HB 455 – awaiting Senate action):** Repeals statutory language that conflicts with an individual's constitutional right to remain silent during questioning and protects against self-incrimination.

**Hunter Education Course (HB 1168 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires public school districts, upon request of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, to make a school facility under its control available for the purpose of conducting a hunter education course.

**Volunteer Instructor License (HB 1452 – awaiting Senate action):** Creates a "Volunteer Instructor License" to provide a discounted hunting license for volunteer Hunter Trapper Education (HTE) instructors.

**Blood-Tracking Dogs (HB 1722 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows the use of a leashed blood-tracking dog to track white-tailed deer, black bear and elk in an attempt to recover an animal which has been legally killed or wounded.



# AGRICULTURE

**Clean and Green Update (Act 89 of 2016, formerly HB 806):** Amends the Pennsylvania Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act (Clean and Green) to prohibit the application of use values that result in assessments higher than fair market value.

**Industrial Hemp (Act 92 of 2016, formerly HB 967):** Establishes authority, in conformance with federal law, for an agricultural pilot program to research industrial hemp.

**Wind Power (HB 188 – awaiting Senate action):** Provides a preserved farmland owner with at least 50 acres the access to grant a right-of-way to install a wind power generation system and requires the wind power generation company to conduct a study to determine the presence of endangered or threatened species that may be adversely affected by the system.

**Milk Premiums (HB 1265 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires milk dealers, including co-ops, to provide the specific dollar amount of state-mandated premium on the written statement that accompanies each payment for milk.

**Farm Stand Signs (HB 1561 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires PennDOT to establish and enforce specifications for local farmers' market and farm stand signs on state highways and allows for the waiver of the permit fee requirement.

**Transit Revitalization Investment District Act (SB 385 – awaiting Senate concurrence):** Reforms and modernizes the Transit Revitalization Investment District Act and identifies an additional funding source.



# CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Sinkhole Disclosure (Act 6 of 2015, formerly HB 341):** Requires that a property disclosure statement to a residential real estate purchaser include notification of any sinkholes, the location and condition of defined storm water facilities, and whether the purchaser is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the storm water facilities.

**Fairness in Multiple Copayments (Act 39 of 2015, formerly SB 487):** Adds a new article to the Insurance Company Law to limit multiple copayments and coinsurances for individuals seeking physical therapy, chiropractic or occupational therapy services.

**Stretching Consumer Dollars (Act 45 of 2016, formerly SB 489):** Lowers the fee that licensed check cashers are permitted to charge for cashing government-issued checks or government assistance checks, requires the public posting of fees for cashing checks and allows recovery of losses due to fraudulent misrepresentation.

**Smart Meter Data Release (HB 395 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires customer approval before information gathered by smart meter technology can be shared with government agencies, except in circumstances such as compliance with a court order or imminent threats to public health or safety.

**Do-Not-Call List Registration (HB 820 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows subscribers to remain on the state’s “do-not-call” list without re-registering every five years; prohibits telemarketing on legal holidays; and requires a telemarketer using a robocall system to have an opt-out provision during the phone call.

**Phishing Prohibited (HB 969 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes the offense of “phishing,” in which a person attempts to acquire personal information under false pretenses via electronic communication.

**Credit Report Freeze (HB 1184 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows an individual consumer to place a permanent freeze on his or her credit report so that the report may only be viewed by credit reporting agencies, fraud prevention agencies and law enforcement agencies.

**Community Dispute Mediation (HB 1774 – awaiting Senate action):** Grants the power to investigate and mediate disputes in planned communities, cooperatives and condominiums to the Bureau of Consumer Protection in the Office of Attorney General.

**Licensee Reporting Requirements (SB 538 – awaiting Senate action):**

Requires licensees of all boards within the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs to report any disciplinary action taken by a licensing agency of another state, and felony, misdemeanor and drug or alcohol related summary convictions to their licensing board within 30 days; provides temporary and automatic license suspension authority for all boards; and authorizes the commissioner of the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs to expunge the disciplinary record of a licensee.



# ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY

## **Beneficial Use of Treated Mine Water (Act 47 of 2015, formerly SB 875):**

Encourages the beneficial use of treated mine water by clarifying liabilities associated with this water source. Using treated mine water can potentially reduce withdrawal demands placed upon the state's rivers and streams.

**Conventional Oil and Gas Industry (Act 52 of 2016, formerly SB 279):** Halts the implementation of new regulations on the conventional (shallow well) oil and gas industry and creates the Pennsylvania Grade Crude Development Advisory Council to advise and assist DEP in ensuring any new regulations affecting the conventional oil and gas industry are reasonable and relevant to the industry. The council is also directed to make recommendations to promote the long-term viability and development of the conventional oil and gas industry, including a plan to responsibly increase Penn Grade Crude production to more adequately supply the refineries that depend upon it.

**Clean Power Plan (Act 57 of 2016, formerly SB 1195):** Extends the amount of time the General Assembly has to review Pennsylvania's compliance plan for the Federal Clean Power Plan.

**Separate Snowmobile and ATV Funds (Act 97 of 2016, formerly SB 648):** Requires the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to divide the current snowmobile and ATV restricted account into two separate funds; requires an annual report on income and expenditures from the accounts; and updates membership of the Snowmobile and ATV Advisory Committee.

**EQB Legal Counsel (HB 1099 – awaiting Senate action):** Establishes independent legal counsel for the Environmental Quality Board, which is charged with the formulation, adoption and promulgation of rules and regulations concerning environmental protection in the Commonwealth.

**Private Dam Owner Assistance (HB 1712 – awaiting Senate action):** Provides financial assistance to private dam owners to meet their financial obligations under the Dam Safety and Encroachments Act.



# STRONGER COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Code Compliance (Act 34 of 2015, formerly SB 330):** Amends the Municipalities Code to establish the offense of failure to comply with a code requirement.

**Uniform Planned Community Act/ Uniform Condominium Act (Acts 37 and 38 of 2015, formerly SBs 687 and 688):** Amends the Uniform Planned Community Act and the Uniform Condominium Act to clarify that the creation of planned communities and condominiums out of existing land or facilities will not require municipal approval unless and until new structures or buildings are constructed within the community.

**Planning Commission Appointments (Act 42 of 2015, formerly HB 33):** Authorizes the governing body of a municipality to appoint at least one but no more than three residents of the municipality to serve as alternate members of the planning commission for a term of four years. Because planning commission members are volunteers and are not always available for meetings, this law is designed to assist planning commissions in achieving consistent quorums and avoiding backlogs.

**Tax Collector Continuing Education (Act 48 of 2015, formerly HB 823):** Makes clarifications to Act 164 of 2014 regarding basic and continuing education for tax collectors. Among the changes are extending the effective date for mandatory training requirements, lowering the number of continuing education hours required from six hours every year to two hours over the course of a four-year term, and clarifying the section that grandfathers current tax collectors.

**Housing Affordability (Act 58 of 2015, formerly HB 792):** Uses revenue from the Realty Transfer Tax to provide additional funding for the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund.

**Real Estate Tax Sale Law Changes (Acts 77 and 85 of 2015, formerly HBs 907 and 909):** Amends the Real Estate Tax Sale Law to establish standardized requirements for posting tax delinquent property prior to a potential or actual sale of the property, and to provide for the collection of additional costs related to rehabilitation and maintenance of properties not sold at an upset sale.

**Eminent Domain Updates (Act 88 of 2015, formerly HB 1411):** Brings the Eminent Domain Code into compliance with revisions made by Congress to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act.

**Public Utility Acquisition (Act 12 of 2016, formerly HB 1326):** Establishes a process for determining the fair market value of a water or wastewater company acquired by a water or wastewater public utility for rate-making purposes.

**Hotel Tax Changes (Act 18 of 2016, formerly HB 794):** Gives 54 counties currently authorized to impose an optional county hotel room tax the option to increase the maximum tax from 3 percent to 5 percent.

**Uniform Planned Community Act/ Uniform Condominium Act Changes (Act 21 of 2016, formerly HB 1340):** Amends the Pennsylvania Uniform Planned Community Act and the Uniform Condominium Act with technical clarifications regarding liens for assessments and amendment clarifications. The bill aims to ensure that these self-governing communities are not affected negatively by a recent U.S. Court of Appeals decision and new federal mortgage underwriting guidelines.

**Neighborhood Improvement Districts (Act 28 of 2016, formerly HB 944):** Amends the Community and Economic Improvement Act with several clarifications and changes regarding the management of neighborhood improvement districts in Philadelphia.

**Community and Economic Improvement Act (Act 32 of 2016, formerly HB 1788):** Amends the Community and Economic Improvement Act to clarify circumstances in which a Neighborhood Improvement District (NID) overlaps with a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district.

**Storm Water Management (Act 62 of 2016, formerly HB 1325, and HB 1394 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the Second Class Township Code and the Borough Code to give local governments the authority to implement storm water management ordinances and to assess a fee to fund the planning, management, implementation, construction and maintenance of storm water facilities.

**Tax Abatements (HB 613 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows developers and property owners to receive a tax abatement incentive once they apply and are approved to rebuild upon an abandoned or blighted property or in a deteriorated area.

**Local Tax Enabling Act (HB 1256 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the Local Tax Enabling Act to update the calculation of the maximum Earned Income Tax (EIT) rate that may be used when a school district or municipality eliminates its occupation tax.

**Bingo Prizes (HB 1334 – awaiting Senate action):** Increases bingo prize limits, allows the daily operation of bingo, permits advertisement of prize amounts and makes other omnibus changes to the Bingo Law.



**Correcting Code Violations (HB 1437 – awaiting Senate action):** Reduces to 12 the number of months a purchaser has to correct known code violations on a property he or she has purchased.

**Cultural Improvement Districts (HB 1490 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows a municipality to establish a Cultural Improvement District.

**Homeless Housing (HB 1500 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows land banks to partner with other entities to convert properties into housing facilities for the homeless.

**Storm Water Management (HB 1661 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the First Class Township Code to give townships the authority to implement storm water management ordinances and to assess a fee to fund the planning, management, implementation, construction and maintenance of storm water facilities.

**Charitable Organizations (HB 1940 – awaiting Senate action):** Expands the registration exemption for volunteer charitable organizations provided the organization's volunteers, members or auxiliary or affiliate receive no direct or indirect compensation for solicitation of funds or that no fundraising activities be carried on by a professional solicitor.

**Public Notice (HB 1956 – awaiting Senate action):** Requires municipalities to give public notice and hold at least one advertised public meeting prior to entering into an agreement to sell or lease a water or sewer system.



# TRANSPORTATION

**Ridesharing (Act 22 of 2015, formerly HB 140):** Permits a carpool or vanpool operated by a private operator to be considered a ridesharing arrangement.

**CDL Updates (Act 49 of 2015, formerly SB 925):** Updates language for the qualification standards for commercial driver learner's permits and commercial driver's licenses in conformity with new regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

**Oversized Load Escorts (Act 55 of 2015, formerly SB 748):** Eliminates the mandatory escort of super-sized loads by the Pennsylvania State Police and replaces them with certified pilot escorts.

**CDL Updates (Act 29 of 2015, formerly SB 925):** Updates language for the qualification standards for commercial driver learner's permits and commercial driver licenses in conformity with new regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

**Share-the-Road License Plate (Act 36 of 2016, formerly HB 150):** Establishes the "Share-The-Road" registration plate for passenger vehicles and light trucks or motorhomes. The \$40 fee for the plate is to be used exclusively to maintain PennDOT's central office position of Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator and to fund highway pedalcycle signs.

**Bike Medics (Act 44 of 2016, formerly SB 61):** Removes all restrictions on the use of pedalcycles by bike medics during the course of performing official duties.

**Disability License Plate, Parking Placard (Act 55 of 2016, formerly SB 983):** Allows parents and/or guardians of a child/adult child with a qualifying disability in their care and the spouse of an individual with a qualifying disability to receive a disability license plate and parking placard.

**Traffic Signals/Red Light Enforcement/Green Light Go Program (Act 101 of 2016, formerly SB 1267):** Amends the Vehicle Code regarding proceeding through inoperable or malfunctioning traffic signals; initiates a study regarding automated red light enforcement (ARLE); extends ARLE to July 15, 2027; and reduces the local match for the Green Light-Go Municipal Signal Partnership grant program.

**Philadelphia Traffic Court (SB 283 – pending referendum vote):** Seeks to amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to eliminate the Traffic Court of Philadelphia.

**Ride on Red (HB 950 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows vehicles that fail to be detected by automated traffic signals to proceed with caution and removes the sunset provisions on the automated red light enforcement systems in Philadelphia and certain municipalities.

**Motor Carrier Inspections (HB 1413 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the Vehicle Code to allow for a registration fee refund and to eliminate the semi-annual inspection requirements on motor carrier vehicles over 17,000 pounds.

**Temporary Registration (HB 2025 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows temporary “in-transit” vehicle registrations to be valid for 60 days and allows PennDOT to both suspend and impose monetary penalties on inspection stations for violations or noncompliance.



## MISCELLANEOUS

**Medical Liability Insurance (Act 2 of 2015, formerly HB 159):** Offers reciprocal insurance exchanges that write medical liability insurance the option to convert to a stock insurance company.

**Bail Bondsman Industry (Act 16 of 2015, formerly SB 397):** Privatizes and regulates the bail bondsman industry in Pennsylvania.

**Youth Sports Officials (Act 44 of 2015, formerly HB 315):** Allows minors ages 12 and 13 to be employed as youth sports officials.

**Jury Duty Exemptions (Act 54 of 2015, formerly SB 210):** Adds persons 75 years or older who request to be excused, judges and magisterial district judges of the Commonwealth and judges of the United States and women who are nursing children to the current exemptions from jury duty.

**Activities for Foster Children (Act 75 of 2015, formerly HB 477):** Authorizes the caregivers of children and youth who are in out-of-home placement to approve or disapprove their foster child's participation in age-appropriate extracurricular, family and social activities without prior approval or disapproval of that participation from the county child welfare agency, private placement agency, or the court, as long as that decision does not conflict with any applicable court order and service plan.

**Motor Home Financing (Act 86 of 2015, formerly HB 1195):** Permits motor homes and other recreational vehicles to be financed at lending institutions for up to 20 years.

**Civil Service Act Changes (Act 69 of 2016, formerly SB 1154):** Amends the Civil Service Act to modernize the method of notification for job applicants and the agency selection process for eligible candidates for open positions. Specifically, the law allows the Civil Service Commission to notify job candidates of their placement and position on the list of eligible candidates by e-mail or other communication methods; allows the commission to expand the "Rule of Three" to a larger number of qualified applicants; and allows for "vacancy-based hiring" where an applicant can apply for a specific vacancy.

**Powers of Attorney Changes (Act 79 of 2016, formerly SB 1104):** Amends the Probate, Estates and Fiduciaries Code to make changes to various provisions, including those related to powers of attorney, trusts and powers of appointment.

**Auctioneer Licensing (Act 88 of 2016, formerly HB 325):** Updates the Auctioneer Licensing and Trading Assistant Registration Act by repealing and reorganizing a number of provisions and eliminates the Auction House license.

**ICA Reforms (Act 99 of 2016, formerly SB 1221):** Amends the Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority Act for Cities of the Second Class by providing additional accountability and oversight.

**Custodial Accounts (HB 122 – awaiting Senate action):** Increases the dollar limit of a transfer that may be made from the custodial account of a minor without court approval from \$25,000 to \$50,000 and allows a judge to order that assets of a minor acquired through inheritance be placed in a 529 account.

**Adoption Records (HB 162 – awaiting Senate action):** Allows Pennsylvania adult adoptees access to their original birth record information without the consent of birth parents; allows redaction of birth parent names from a birth record; and provides contact preference form options.

**No-Fault Divorce (HB 380 – awaiting Senate action):** Reduces the mandatory separation period in certain no-fault divorces from two years to one year.

**Funeral Expense Reimbursement (HB 443 – awaiting Senate action):** Permits the grandchild of a decedent to be reimbursed from the decedent's bank account assets for funeral expenses paid by the grandchild.

**Veto Power Over DRPA (HB 1087 – awaiting Senate action):** Provides veto power to the governor over the actions of Pennsylvania's commissioners on the Delaware River Port Authority Board.

**Adoption Hearings (HB 1531 – awaiting Senate action):** Eliminates the requirement of holding a hearing to confirm a consent to an adoption when the birth parent or parents of the child being placed for adoption have executed valid consents to an adoption.

**Adoption Intermediary (HB 1532 – awaiting Senate action):** Amends the definition of "intermediary" in adoption law to include a licensed attorney or social worker who is acting in that capacity.

**Adoption Counseling Services (HB 1524 – awaiting Senate action):** Ensures that birth parents have access to adoption-related counseling services when they are considering relinquishing parental rights and placing a child for adoption, or when they have relinquished parental rights and have consented to placing their child for adoption.

**Consent to Adoption (HB 1526 – awaiting Senate action):** Shortens the period in which a birth mother, birth father or putative father can revoke his or her consent to an adoption from 30 days to 14 days.

**Birth Mother Reimbursements (HB 1529 – awaiting Senate action):**

Adds reasonable expenses incurred by a birth mother of a child being placed for adoption to the list of expenses currently permitted to be reimbursed in an adoption process and paid by the adoptive parents, and eliminates the requirement for a report of intermediary in the adoption process.

**Compulsive Gambling Program (HB 1843 – awaiting Senate action):**

Places the operation of the state’s compulsive and problem gambling program under the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs.

**Civil Air Patrol (HB 2026 – awaiting Senate action):**

Authorizes the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to operate as liaison for the Civil Air Patrol and supervise the expenditures of state funding as well as the maintenance and use of Commonwealth facilities by the Civil Air Patrol.

**Real Estate Taxes in Philadelphia (HB 1871 – awaiting Senate action):**

Proposes to amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to give the General Assembly the power to permit a city of the first class to impose taxes on real estate that is used for business purposes at a rate that exceeds the tax rate applicable to other real estate.

**Contract Reform (HB 2107 -- awaiting Senate action):**

Prohibits the Department of General Services from contracting with certain companies unless the company certifies that they do not engage in an economic boycott of a person or an entity based in or doing business with the Commonwealth unless prohibited by congressional statute.







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