

A

Communication
from the Policy
Information Exchange

Slice of Pie

A *Slice of Pie* is an ongoing publication keeping our readers informed about important public policy issues. It is the mission of the Policy Information Exchange to **educate and inform Pennsylvanians with disabilities, their families and advocates, and the general public, regarding public policy issues and to further the exchange of policy information between the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council and federal, state and local policy makers.**

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State News

PA Legislature Opens 2023-2024 Legislative Session

On Tuesday, January 3rd, the PA House and PA Senate met to swear in legislators for the start of the 2023-2024 Legislative Session. Governor-Elect Shapiro & Lt. Governor-Elect Davis were sworn in on January 17th.

In the Senate, Senator Kim Ward (Westmoreland County) was unanimously elected as President Pro Tempore of the Senate. She has also assumed the role of PA's Lieutenant Governor following John Fetterman's retirement and until Lieutenant Governor-Elect Austin Davis was sworn into office on January 17th.

In the PA House, Representative Mark Rozzi (Berks County) was elected by a vote of 115-85 to be the Speaker of the House. While elected to

office as a Democrat, Speaker Rozzi has stated he will now be an Independent - not caucusing with either the Democrats or Republicans and will staff his office from both parties.

PA House and Senate to Hold Special Elections

Both chambers have announced the dates of special elections to fill vacant seats. The Senate will hold a special election on January 31st to fill the 28th District (Columbia County). The House

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will hold special elections on February 7th to fill the 32nd District (Allegheny County), 34th District (Allegheny County), and 35th District (Allegheny County).

PA General Assembly Holds Leadership Elections

Members of both the Republican and Democrat Caucuses in the PA House and Senate have held leadership elections for their respective caucuses.

- The PA Senate Republican's new leadership team for the upcoming 2023-2024 Legislative Session include:
 - o Senator Kim Ward (Westmoreland County) will be the 1st female President Pro Tempore in PA History.
 - o **Senator Joe Pittman (Indiana County) will be the Majority Leader.**
 - o **Senator Ryan Aument (Lancaster County) will be the Majority Whip.**
 - o **Senator Scott Martin (Lancaster County) will be the Majority Appropriations Chair.**
 - o **Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill (York County) will be the Republican Caucus Chair.**
 - o **Senator Camera Bartolotta (Washington County) will be the Republican Caucus Secretary.**
 - o **Senator Dan Laughlin (Erie County) will be the Republican Policy Chair.**
 - o **Senator Lisa Baker (Luzerne County) will be the Republican Caucus Administrator.**

- The PA Senate Democrat's new leadership team for the upcoming 2023-2024 Legislative Session include:

- o Senator Jay Costa (Allegheny County) will be the Minority Leader
- o **Senator Tina Tartaglione (Philadelphia County) will be the Minority Whip.**
- o Senator Vincent Hughes (Philadelphia County) will be the Minority Appropriations Chair.
- o Senator Wayne Fontana (Allegheny County) will be the Democrat Caucus Chair.
- o Senator Maria Collett (Bucks County) will be the Democrat Caucus Secretary.
- o Senator Katie Muth (Chester County) will be the Democrat Policy Chair.
- o **Senator Judy Schwank (Berks County) will be the Democrat Caucus Administrator.**
- The PA House Republican's new leadership team for the upcoming 2023-2024 Legislative Session include:
 - o Representative Bryan Cutler (Lancaster County) will be the Republican Leader.
 - o **Representative Tim O'Neil (Washington County) will be the Republican Whip.**
 - o **Representative Seth Grove (York County) will be the Republican Appropriations Chairman.**
 - o Representative George Dunbar (Westmoreland County) will be the Republican Caucus Chair.
 - o Representative Martina White (Philadelphia County) will be the Republican Caucus Secretary.
 - o **Representative Joshua Kail (Beaver County) will be the Republican Policy Chair.**

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- **Representative Sheryl Delozier (Cumberland County) will be the Republican Caucus Administrator.**
- The PA House Democrat's new leadership team for the upcoming 2023-204 Legislative Session include:
 - Representative Joanna McClinton (Philadelphia County) will be the Democrat Leader.
 - Representative Jordan Harris (Philadelphia County) will be the Democrat Whip.
 - Representative Matt Bradford (Montgomery County) will be the Democrat Appropriations Chairman.
 - Representative Dan Miller (Allegheny County) will be the Democrat Caucus Chair.
 - Representative Tina Davis (Bucks County) will be the Democrat Caucus Secretary.
 - Representative Ryan Bizzarro (Erie County) will be the Democrat Policy Chair.
 - Representative Mike Schlossberg (Lehigh County) will be the Democrat Caucus Administrator.
- Note: Member names in bold are new members to a leadership position.

Governor Elect Shapiro & Lt. Governor Elect Davis Name Transition Team

Governor-Elect Josh Shapiro and Lieutenant Governor-Elect Austin Davis announced the members of seven Transition Advisory Committees, which will advise the incoming Administration and prepare to advance Governor-Elect Shapiro's top priorities: growing our economy,

making our communities safer, and ensuring all Pennsylvania students receive a high-quality education. Representatives of the disability community on the transition team include: Josie Badger, J. Badger Consulting; Sherri Landis, Executive Director of The Arc of Pennsylvania; Nancy Murray, Executive Director of The Arc of Greater Pittsburgh; Nancy Ritchie, representative for the PA DD Council, Richard Edley, President & CEO of Rehabilitation & Community Providers Association; Charles Hooker, President & CEO, Keystone Human Services; and Nancy Thaler, National Consultant on Medicaid-Funded Long-Term Care and Home and Community Based Services.

Governor Elect Shapiro Announces Key Staff

Governor-Elect Shapiro continues to announce the names of key staff who will support his new administration. They include to date:

- Dana Fritz, Chief of Staff
- Lindsey Mauldin, Deputy Chief of Staff for Health and Human Services
- Tori Shriver, Deputy Chief of Staff for Education and Workforce Development
- Michael Pipe, Deputy Chief of Staff for Public Safety
- Sam Robinson, Deputy Chief of Staff for Consumers and the Environment
- Danielle Okai, Deputy Chief of Staff for Economic Development
- Joseph Lee, Deputy Chief of Staff for Administration and Opportunity
- Uri Monson, Secretary of Budget
- Akbar Hossain, Secretary of Policy
- Mike Vereb, Secretary of Legislative Affairs

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- Al Schmidt, Secretary of State
- Dr. Val Arkoosh, Secretary of DHS
- Dr. Debra Bogen, Secretary of Health
- Dr. Khalid Mumin, Secretary of Education
- Nancy Walker, Secretary of Labor & Industry
- Michael Carroll, Secretary of Transportation
- Pat Browne, Secretary of Revenue
- Jason Kavulich, Secretary of Aging

PA Statewide Transition Plan for HCBS Submitted to CMS

The Office of Developmental Programs has submitted PA's Statewide Transition Plan for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

To view the plan, visit [here](#).

Wolf Administration Announces \$14 Million Grant to Support More People with Disabilities in Competitive Integrated Employment

Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) Secretary Jennifer Berrier and Department of Human Services (DHS) Acting Secretary Meg Snead announced the Wolf Administration's goal of using a **\$14 million federal grant** to help Pennsylvanians with disabilities earning subminimum wage transition to competitive, integrated employment.

Read full press release [here](#).

Wolf Administration Releases Behavioral Health Commission Report, Outlines Recommendations For Allocation Of \$100 Million To Support Behavioral Health Needs

The Wolf Administration **released a report** outlining recommendations from the Behavioral Health Commission for Adult Behavioral Health. Established by Act 54 of 2022, the multi-disciplinary commission was charged with making recommendations to the General Assembly for the allocation of \$100 million in one-time American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding included to support adult behavioral health needs in the 2022-23 Fiscal Code.

Read full press release [here](#).

PA DHS Mass Care Public Facing Website Goes Live

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (PADHS) coordinates the Commonwealth's response to disaster-caused human services needs. This includes food, shelter, and disability-related needs as well as emergency behavioral health services. PADHS manages Disaster Operational/Planning Task Forces and maintains Mass Care supplies, equipment, and specially trained staff available to support local communities in times of disaster.

Learn more [here](#).

OLTL Announces Launch of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Portal

The Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL) is pleased to announce the launch of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Funding Reporting portal. The online portal will be available on September 30, 2022, for OLTL providers to submit costs associated with ARPA funding

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distributed in 2021 in order to comply with DHS' reporting requirements.

Access the portal [here](#)

Longtime Central Pa. Disability Activist Named to National Council: 'We Don't Need to be Fixed'

"A longtime advocate from Central Pennsylvania, Theo Braddy, recently added a new job to his resume: a member of the **National Council on Disability**, appointed by President Joe Biden. Members appointed to the National Council on Disability make recommendations to the President and Congress on policies affecting millions of Americans with disabilities."

Read article [here](#).

Pa. Judges can Dismiss Charges Against People "Incompetent" to Stand Trial

"The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has corrected a decades-old flaw in state law that left severely mentally ill people behind bars indefinitely, and highlighted lingering problems for the man at the center of the case, and others like him. The court's September ruling in *Commonwealth v. Jquan Humphrey* cleared the way for judges to dismiss charges against defendants who would never be deemed competent to participate in their own trial, a longstanding point of confusion in state law."

Read article [here](#)

COVID-19 Information & Resources

Department of Health

The Pennsylvania Department of Health continues to monitor the ongoing situation with Coronavirus (COVID-19). To get the most accurate and up-to-date information including PA

vaccine distribution plan, recommendations, closures, and statistics, visit: the **Department of Health's website**.

Pennsylvania Departments of Health and Human Services would like to share resources surrounding COVID-19 vaccine information for individuals that have limited or no internet access. The following services are available to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine, including locating a healthcare provider, by phone:

- If an individual does not have a direct support professional (DSP) that can provide them with the appropriate COVID-19 vaccine and healthcare provider information, they can call the PA Health Hotline at 1-877-724-3258.
- Persevere PA is a COVID-19 crisis hotline designed to link callers with counselors to assist with the mental health impacts of COVID-19. They can also assist a caller in finding a healthcare provider to administer the vaccine when their corresponding phase arrives. Call Persevere PA at 1-855-284-2494.
- When arranging for an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to receive information via telephone, PA Relay Services are available by dialing 711.

COVID.gov

The **covid.gov** website helps people access vaccines, tests, treatments, and high-quality masks. COVID.gov is available in English, Spanish, and Simplified Chinese and is accessible for those using assistive technologies.

Call **1-800-232-0233** (TTY **1-888-720-7489**) to get help in English, Spanish, and more than 150 other languages—8 AM to midnight ET, 7 days a week.

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For individuals with disabilities who may need additional support, the **Disability Information and Access Line** (DIAL) is available to help via email at **DIAL@usaginganddisability.org**.

Test to Treat Initiative

While vaccines remain the most effective way to prevent COVID-19 infection, there are also treatments available for people who are infected with the disease. These treatments may help individuals avoid severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

The Test to Treat initiative is available at thousands of locations nationwide, including pharmacy-based clinics, federally-funded health centers, long-term care facilities, and community-based sites. In May 2022, the program was expanded to include **federally-supported Test to Treat sites**, which reach vulnerable communities. Test to Treat partners include some of the nation's largest pharmacy chains.

To find a participating Test to Treat site near you:

- Use the web-based **Test to Treat Locator**, also available in **Spanish** and **Chinese**.
- Call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 hotline, which can provide information on the Test to Treat initiative. Call **1-800-232-0233** (TTY **1-888-720-7489**) to get help in English, Spanish, and more than 150 other languages—8 AM to midnight ET, 7 days a week.
- The **Disability Information and Access Line** (DIAL) is also available to help people with disabilities access services. To get help, call **1-888-677-1199**, Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 8 PM ET or email **DIAL@usaginganddisability.org**.

Learn more about the **Test to Treat Initiative**.

The CDC Recommends Updated COVID-19 Booster Shots

Updated (bivalent) boosters became available September 2, 2022. Prior to September 2022, the available boosters were original, monovalent boosters. The **CDC recommends that people ages 5 years and older** receive one updated (bivalent) booster if it has been at least 2 months since their last COVID-19 vaccine dose, whether that was:

- Their final primary series dose, or
- An original (monovalent) booster

People who have gotten more than one original (monovalent) booster are also recommended to get an updated (bivalent) booster. Boosters are an important part of protecting yourself from getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19.

The CDC has developed a tool to determine when or if you (or your child) can get one or more COVID-19 boosters. This tool can be accessed **here**.

Resources for Boosting Vaccinations Among Older Adults and People with Disabilities

As trusted voices in their communities, many aging and disability organizations across the nation are working this season to educate people about the latest vaccines and help older adults and people with disabilities overcome any logistical challenges they face in getting vaccinated.

- The **ACL COVID-19** webpage provides resources and information for older adults and people with disabilities, including resources for people with COVID-related disabilities.
- The **Disability Information and Access Line** (DIAL) helps people with disabilities

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get information on COVID-19 vaccinations and testing.

- The **Eldercare Locator** connects older adults and their families to services in the community.

Department of Health Vaccination Dashboard By Legislative District

Pennsylvanians can access COVID-19 vaccination rates by legislative district on the Commonwealth's **open data portal**, in addition to the zip code, county-level and statewide vaccination data already available. The vaccination data by legislative district excludes those districts fully or partially located in Philadelphia County, which is a separate CDC-designated vaccine jurisdiction. The legislative district dashboard will be updated monthly.

Access **PA's COVID-19 Dashboard here**.

Disability Rights Pennsylvania Vaccine Hotline Center

Disability Rights Pennsylvania is operating a Vaccine Hotline to assist Pennsylvanians with disabilities who are interested in getting the COVID-19 vaccine Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at 1 (833) 377-2829 or **vaccine@disabilityrightspa.org**.

Resources

- **The Arc of Pennsylvania's COVID-19 Health Care Barriers Among People with Disabilities Report**
- Article: **New Research Finds COVID-19 was the Leading Killer of People with Developmental Disabilities**
- **COVID-19 Materials for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Care Providers** – CDC Resources for People with IDD

- **Jefferson Health Study – Individuals with ID at Great Risk from COVID-19**
- an analysis from a national study confirming that those with intellectual disabilities (ID) are at greatest risk of death from COVID-19 after those of older age/elderly.
- **Vaccinations: Unpaid Caregivers Attestation Information** - a letter to verify eligibility for the vaccination.
- Article: **Examining How Crisis Standards of Care May Lead to Intersectional Medical Discrimination Against COVID-19 Patients**
- Article: **New COVID-19 Response Legislation Finally Recognizes Urgent Needs of People with Disabilities**
- Article: **ADA Concerns Raised Over COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout - Disability Scoop**
- **PA COVID-19 Resources**
- **Multilingual Resources from PA Departments.**
- **Mental Health Information and Support.**
- **Plain Language Guides/Videos on the COVID-19 Pandemic**
- **Disability Rights Pennsylvania – COVID-19 Vaccination FAQ**
- **COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on the PA ID/A Workforce Crisis Report**
- Article: **Study Among Vaccinated, Those With Down Syndrome Face Highest Risk From COVID-19**

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Bills of Interest

Below we summarize some bills of interest to the disability community from the 2021-2022 Session. Any bill that was not been signed into law by November 30th, 2022 will need to start the legislative process again, during the 2023-2024 Legislative Session that began on December 1, 2022.

For more information about these bills or any other state legislative activity, go to <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/>.

HB 25. Introduced by Representative Michael J. Puskaric (R-Allegheny). This bill would repeal the mail-in voting provisions contained in Act 77 of 2019. Abolishing the No Excuse **Mail in Vote**. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would remove the ability for individuals with disabilities to enroll in mail-in voting. This would not remove the ability to apply for an absentee ballot.

HB 44. Introduced by Representative Seth M. Grove (R-York). This bill would further provide for establishment of value-based models relating to the **Managed Care Organization Outcomes Program** and for managed care organization Medicaid contracts. Referred to Health, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would provide incentives for hospitals and MCO's to improve healthcare outcomes under Medicaid and establishes cost reduction targets for the Department of Human Services.

HB 45. Introduced by Representative Francis X. Ryan (R-Lebanon). This bill would **merge eight existing state agencies into four new state agencies**. These new agencies would be the Commonwealth Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of Business, Tourism and Workforce Development (DBTWD), the Department of Local Government and

Community Affairs (DLGCA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Each merger in the legislation will require the adoption of a strategic plan detailing how the agencies described in the legislation are to be combined. To provide adequate time to prepare for the mergers, the legislation gives seven months following the effective date to develop the strategic plan. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would merge the Department of Labor & Industry with functions from the Department of Community & Economic Development and the Department of State. It ensures economic development programs are under one department.

HB 47. Introduced by Representative Matthew D. Dowling (R-Fayette). This bill would **merge eight existing state agencies into four new state agencies**. These new agencies would be the Commonwealth Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of Business, Tourism and Workforce Development (DBTWD), the Department of Local Government and Community Affairs (DLGCA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Each merger in the legislation will require the adoption of a strategic plan detailing how the agencies described in the legislation are to be combined. To provide adequate time to prepare for the mergers, the legislation gives seven months following the effective date to develop the strategic plan. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021. Reported as amended, Jan. 27, 2021. First consideration, Jan. 27, 2021. Laid on the table, Jan. 27, 2021.

Impact: Create the Department of Local Government and Community Affairs (DLGCA) to address local community needs and concerns.

HB 49. Introduced by Representative Paul Schemel (R-Franklin). This bill would **merge eight existing state agencies into four new state agencies**. These new agencies would

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be the Commonwealth Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of Business, Tourism and Workforce Development (DBTWD), the Department of Local Government and Community Affairs (DLGCA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Each merger in the legislation will require the adoption of a strategic plan detailing how the agencies described in the legislation are to be combined. To provide adequate time to prepare for the mergers, the legislation gives seven months following the effective date to develop the strategic plan. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would merge the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services into one agency.

HB 50. Introduced by Representative Seth M. Grove (R-York). This bill would introduce a proposed constitutional amendment to require any **supplemental spending** to be approved in a standalone bill by the General Assembly. Referred to Appropriations, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would set forth a constitutional amendment process to require any supplemental spending to be approved in a standalone bill by the General Assembly.

HB 51. Introduced by Representative Timothy J. O'Neal (R-Washington). This bill is part of a **Financial Reform Package**. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would require any surplus funds to be deposited into the state's Rainy-Day Fund. Deposits into the Rainy-Day Fund would continue until the state has saved an equivalent to 20% of the commonwealth's total revenue collections.

HB 52. Introduced by Representative Andrew Lewis (R-Dauphin). This bill is part of a **Financial Reform Package**. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would establish a State Council on Finances which would consist of 12 members. These members would be the following individuals: Secretary of Revenue; Budget Secretary; The Auditor General; State Treasurer; Director of the Independent Fiscal office; The Minority Chairperson of the Senate Appropriation Committee; The Majority Chairperson of the Senate Appropriation Committee; The Minority Chairperson of the House Appropriation Committee; The Majority Chairperson of the Senate Appropriation Committee; An individual with a background in private or public finance appointed by the governor; An individual with a background in private or public finance appointed by the President Pro-Tempore of the Senate; An individual with a background in private or public finance appointed by the Speaker of the House.

HB 53. Introduced by Representative Dawn W. Keefer (R-York). This bill is part of a **Financial Reform Package**. Referred to Appropriations, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Commonwealth's Constitution to prevent the creation or use of special funds except for the following reasons: Motor License Fund; Unemployment Compensation Fund; Workers Compensation Fund; State Pension system; ABLE Accounts; TAP Accounts; Any fund paid into by a specific industry for a specific industry.

HB 71. Introduced by Representative Ryan Warner (R-Fayette). This bill would establish **spending limits** that the Commonwealth must abide by each fiscal year. The proposed constitutional amendment would limit the amount the Commonwealth's spending may increase, based on a three-year average of the Commonwealth's inflation and population growth. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021. Laid on the table, Jan. 13, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Pennsylvania Constitution to establish spending limits that the

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Commonwealth must abide by each fiscal year.

HB 85. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for **students with disabilities** at institutions of higher education. Referred to Education, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would improve the transition to post-secondary schools for students with disabilities by incorporating parts of Senator Bob Casey's federal RISE (Respond, Innovate, Succeed and Empower) Act.

HB 87. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for legislative findings and declarations, for definitions, for **Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)**, for powers and duties, for State plan, for grants and funding and for compliance with standards; repealing provisions relating to assurances of centers for independent living; further providing for allocation of funds by designated State agencies; and making an appropriation. Referred to Human Services, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would institute updates and changes to Act 139 of 1994 that will modernize its language to be in lockstep with the Federal Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA). These changes include updated guidance on Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council (PA SILC) board composition, the role of the DSE with PA SILC and CILs, addition of the 5th core services for CILS of transition (youth, institutional settings), federally funded CILs already are required to do this service per WIOA) and a new base level for funding of (\$350,000).

HB 89. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would require pharmacies to make **accessible prescription drug container labels** available to individuals who are deafblind and visually-impaired when requested. These labels will be available, at no cost to the consumer, in audio, braille, and

large font formats. This measure is modeled off of the best practices released by the United States Access Board in 2013, and will enable individuals with visual impairments to manage their medications securely, independently, and privately. Referred to Health, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would require pharmacies to make accessible prescription drug container labels available to individuals who are deafblind and visually-impaired when requested. These labels will be available, at no cost to the consumer, in audio, braille, and large font formats.

HB 92. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for **intellectual disability and autism** fee schedule rates. Referred to Human Services, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Human Services Code requiring that rates for Direct Support Professionals annually be set based on a national market consumer index.

HB 94. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for definitions and for **medical excuses from attending school**. Referred to Education, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would allow for valid medical excuses submitted in a timely manner to not be considered an unexcused absence and lead to medical truancy.

HB 102. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide access to trained, professional **support services** in every school district across the Commonwealth. Referred to Education, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would require school districts to evaluate their needs based on school population and requires a necessary complement of school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses to ensure that access to help is not a

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problem and that case load management is not an issue.

HB 108. Introduced by Representative Valerie S. Gaydos (R-Allegheny). This bill would reform state government operations including **Medicaid**. This package will codify the grand jury recommendations along with enacting statutes which mirror federal law to allow the commonwealth to combat fraud in Medicaid and the rest of state government while recouping state tax dollars. Referred to State Government, Jan. 11, 2021.

Third consideration and final passage, Jan. 27, 2021. Referred to State Government, Jan. 28, 2021 [Senate]. Re-referred to Appropriations, June 9, 2021.

Impact: Would require agencies to review their programs and expenditures and assess whether they are highly, moderately or unlikely to be susceptible to an improper payment.

HB 109. Introduced by Representative Clint Owlett (R-Tioga). This bill would reform state government operations including **Medicaid**. This package will codify the grand jury recommendations along with enacting statutes which mirror federal law to allow the commonwealth to combat fraud in Medicaid and the rest of state government while recouping state tax dollars. Referred to Human Services, Jan. 11, 2021. Re-committed to Rules, June 21, 2022.

Impact: Would increase the penalties for making a false claim against the commonwealth's Medicaid Program under Section 1407 of the Human Services Code. Under this bill the penalty for knowing or causing a fraudulent claim to be submitted would commit a felony of the second degree if the fraudulent claim is \$100,000 or more. If the claim is between \$2,000 and \$100,000 the penalty for the fraudulent claim would be a third-degree felony. If the claim is \$2,000 or less the penalty would be a third-degree misdemeanor.

HB 114. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would adopt a **streamlined hiring and promotion process** for qualified individuals with significant disabilities whose physical or mental impairments impact their ability to participate in the competitive hiring and promotion process. Referred to Labor and Industry, Jan. 11, 2021.

Impact: Would amend Part III of Title 71 of the Pennsylvania Code (Civil Service Reform), an appointing authority may noncompetitively appoint an individual with a significant disability to a temporary position when it is necessary to observe an applicant on the job to establish that the applicant is able or ready to perform the duties of the position (trial work period).

HB 184. Introduced by Representative Dawn Keefer (R-York). This bill would implement a sentence enhancement for any individual found guilty of causing or aiding **suicide** when the victim is under 18 years of age or has an intellectual disability. Referred to Judiciary, Jan. 21, 2021. Final Passage, April 7, 2021. Referred to Senate Judiciary, April 9, 2021. Amended and Final Passage in the Senate, June 25, 2021. Concurrence Vote in House, Sept. 21, 2021. Approved by Governor on Sept. 30, 2021 becoming **Act No. 71**.

Impact: Would create a sentencing enhancement in cases where an individual is convicted of causing or aiding suicide of a person who is under the age of 18 or has an intellectual disability.

HB 185. Introduced by Representative Jim Struzzi (R-Indiana). This bill would amend the Crimes Code to **increase the penalty** for those who knowingly commit bodily injury to a person with a physical or intellectual disability. Referred to Judiciary, Jan. 21, 2021. Final Passage [House], March 16, 2021. Amended in Senate Judiciary, September 20, 2022.

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Impact: Would amend the crimes code to provide that any individual that intentionally causes bodily injury to a person with a physical or intellectual disability is guilty of aggravated assault, a felony of the second degree.

HB 217. Introduced by Representative Stanley Saylor (R-York). This bill would provide for **additional appropriations** from the General Fund for the expenses of the Executive Department for the fiscal year July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. Referred to Appropriations, Jan. 22, 2021. Re-committed to Appropriations, Jan. 27, 2021.

Impact: Would appropriate General Funds for the fiscal year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022.

HB 218. Introduced by Representative Stanley Saylor (R-York). This bill would provide for **additional appropriations** from the General Fund for the expenses of the Executive Department for the fiscal year July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021. Referred to Appropriations, Jan. 22, 2021.

Impact: Would appropriate General Funds for the fiscal year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022.

HB 250. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would amend the **Public School Code** to add curriculum requirements for Health classes across Pennsylvania to educate students in an age-appropriate manner about mental health, physical disabilities, and developmental disabilities. Referred to Education, Jan. 25, 2021.

Impact: Would require the Department of Education to create curriculum for Health classes that will educate students in an age-appropriate manner about mental health, physical disabilities, and developmental disabilities.

HB 365. Introduced by Representative Patrick J. Harkins (D-Erie). This bill would remove **derogatory terms/language** from the PA School Code, passed the Senate as amended

unanimously. This bill will now go back to the House for a concurrence vote on the amended bill language. Referred to Education, Feb. 3, 2021. Third consideration and Final Passage, March 22, 2021. Referred to Senate Education, March 22, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, Oct. 26, 2022. Referred to House Rules, Oct. 26, 2022. Re-reported on concurrence, as committed, Oct. 26, 2022.

Impact: Would remove the use of derogatory terms and language in the PA School Code.

HB 404. Introduced by Representative John T. Galloway (D-Bucks). This bill would provide for Statewide **children’s mental health ombudsman**. Referred to Human Services, Feb. 4, 2021.

Impact: This legislation would designate an official be tasked with the following responsibilities: will have the authority to advocate on behalf of children with mental disorders; identify barriers to effective mental health treatment; monitor compliance with laws pertaining to children’s behavioral health services; and investigate and attempt to resolve complaints regarding violations by an entity regulated by the State which have an adverse effect upon children.

HB 407. Introduced by Representative John T. Galloway (D-Bucks). This bill would establish the **School Student Mental Health Assistance** Augmentation Account and provide grants to support school-linked mental health services. Referred to Education, Feb. 4, 2021.

Impact: This legislation would provide for grants to be established to support school-aligned mental health services. These grants can be used by school entities to identify and diagnose mental health conditions among students, fund transportation for children receiving school-linked mental health services when school is out of session, and cover costs associated with delivering telemedicine to school children.

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HB 409. Introduced by Representative John T. Galloway (D-Bucks). This bill would establish a mental health care services clearinghouse. This clearinghouse will serve as a publicly accessible registry of **mental health care resources** available across the Commonwealth and will accordingly assist school personnel in connecting families to community mental health resources. Referred to Human Services, Feb. 4, 2021. Final passage, June 14, 2021. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services June 14, 2021.

Impact: Streamlines and makes a publicly accessible site for information on mental health care services that are available in Pennsylvania. This clearinghouse would increase coordination efforts among schools, communities, and mental health providers.

HB 411. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would require state-owned buildings and certain places of public accommodation, including auditoriums, convention centers, sports arenas, and amusement parks with a maximum occupancy of 2,000 or more people, to install and maintain at least one **adult changing station**. Referred to Labor and Industry Committee, Feb. 4, 2021.

Impact: Would require state-owned buildings and certain places of public accommodation, including auditoriums, convention centers, sports arenas and amusement parks with a maximum occupancy of 2,000 or more people, to install and maintain at least one adult changing station.

HB 464. Introduced by Representative Karen Boback (R-Columbia). This bill would provide for a primary **caregiver support** program and caregivers of individuals with disabilities. Referred to House Aging and Older Adult Services, Feb. 9, 2021. Final passage, April 6, 2021. Referred to Senate Aging and Youth, April 9, 2021. Final passage, June 8, 2021. Approved

by the Governor, June 11, 2021 becoming **Act No. 20**.

Impact: Expands the Family Caregiver Support Program to include caregivers for individuals with disabilities to be eligible for respite and caregiving related service supplies.

HB 493. Introduced by Representative Liz Hanbidge (D-Montgomery). This bill would require health insurance policies to provide coverage for **hearing aids** and a resolution that would urge Congress to expand Medicare coverage to include hearing aids. Referred to Insurance, Feb. 10, 2021.

Impact: Would require health insurance policies to provide coverage for hearing aids and a resolution that would urge Congress to expand Medicare coverage to include hearing aids.

HB 540. Introduced by Representative Karen Boback (R-Columbia). This bill would provide for youth suicide awareness and prevention and providing for violence prevention and **social inclusion**. Referred to Education, Feb. 16, 2021.

Impact: Would require schools to implement at least one hour or a standard class period per year of suicide prevention & training, violence prevention training and social inclusion training to students in grades six through twelve.

HB 543. Introduced by Representative Karen Boback (R-Columbia). This bill would amend the Unemployment Compensation (UC) Law to allow for **reasonable accommodations** to be made for individuals with a disability who are required to take the reemployment class. Referred to Labor and Industry, Feb. 16, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Unemployment Compensation (UC) Law to allow for reasonable accommodations to be made for individuals with a disability who are required to take the reemployment class.

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HB 547. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would create the Department of Accessibility & Inclusion. Referred to State Government, March 2, 2021.

Impact: Would consolidate several existing programs under a new Department of Accessibility and Inclusion and create a secretary position to serve on the governor's cabinet.

HB 581. Introduced by Representative Jared G. Solomon (D-Philadelphia). This bill would provide for tax exemptions for improvements to deteriorated areas and dwellings to incentivize the creation and improvement of **affordable housing units**. Referred to Urban Affairs, Feb. 22, 2021. Third consideration and final passage June 25, 2021. Referred to Senate Urban Affairs and Housing, July 7, 2021. Third and final passage, July 7, 2022. Referred to House Rules, July 7, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 11, 2022, becoming **Act No.58 of 2022**, July 11, 2022.

Impact: Would allow local taxing authorities the opportunity to expand access to affordable housing by providing them a menu of options to pass tax abatements or exemptions for the creation or improvements of affordable housing, both homeownership or rentals.

HB 611. Introduced by Representative Austin A. Davis (D-Allegheny). This bill would establish the **Direct Care Worker Wage Advisory Board** and provides for its powers and duties; providing for minimum wage for direct care workers and for a direct care worker registry; and imposing penalties. Referred to Labor and Industry, Feb. 24, 2021.

Impact: Would direct the state's Secretary of Human Services to create a Direct Care Worker Wage Board. This board would meet to set a minimum wage for direct care workers, examine ways to grow this field, hear complaints from workers, and create a registry of direct care workers in the state.

HB 621. Introduced by Representative Brandon Markosek (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide special **absentee ballots printed in Braille** to qualified voters who submit a written request for a special ballot. Referred to State Government, Feb. 24, 2021.

Impact: Would require the Department of State to provide special absentee ballots printed in braille to qualified voters who submit a written request for a special ballot.

HB 640. Introduced by Representative Daniel Miller (D-Allegheny) and Representative Patty Kim (D-Dauphin). This bill would allow students who were enrolled in school with an active IEP when the COVID-19 state of emergency was declared by Governor to continue to be eligible services under Section 1301 of the School Code until twelve months after the expiration of the emergency declaration. Referred to Education Committee, March 11, 2021.

Impact: Would allow parents to decide if their child who is aging out of special education services participates in an additional year to address the loss of supports and transition services during COVID-19.

HB 649. Introduced by Representative Kathy L. Rapp (R-Warren). This bill would provide for access to long-term care facilities for **essential caregivers**, for additional safety requirements for residents of long-term care facilities, for suspension of access for essential caregivers and for personal protective equipment for essential caregivers. Referred to House Aging and Older Adult Services, Feb. 24, 2021. Final passage, March 24, 2021. Referred to Senate Aging and Youth, March 25, 2021. Final passage, June 16, 2021. Approved by Governor, July 1, 2021. **Act No.67**.

Impact: Would allow a designated essential caregiver to be named for each resident of a long-term care facility.

HB 694. Introduced by Representative Carol

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Hill-Evans (R-York). This bill would address the overall needs, including **mental health**, of students to prevent school dropouts. Referred to Education, Feb. 26, 2021.

Impact: Would assist public schools in procuring the services of non-profit organizations that provide evidence-based student support services to help students remove barriers to learning. Specifically, it will create a program that would allocate grants to schools to be used solely for services addressing the overall needs, including mental health, of students to prevent school dropouts.

HB 726. Introduced by Representative Jason Ortity (R-Washington) and Representative Joseph Hohenstein (D-Philadelphia). This bill would establish the **Disability Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program** for K-12 students. Referred to Education, Oct. 5, 2021.

Impact: Would implement a pilot program for schools to introduce a disability inclusive curriculum that recognizes the political, economic and social contributions of individuals with disabilities. Note: this legislative language was included as part of the 2022-2023 PA State Budget.

HB 784. Introduced by Representative Tim Briggs (D-Montgomery). This bill would require the addition of **mental health education** into existing health and wellness curricula for all primary and secondary schools under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education. Mental health education will be taught in order to establish parity between physical and mental health. Referred to Education, March 8, 2021.

Impact: Would require the addition of mental health education into existing health and wellness curricula for all primary and secondary schools under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education.

HB 806. Introduced by Representative Joe Ciresi (D-Montgomery). This bill would create

an **Education Reform** Commission. The commission will conduct a comprehensive study and make concrete recommendations on various educational topics including equal access to education for all students. Referred to Education, March 8, 2021.

Impact: Would create an Education Reform Commission tasked with performing an in-depth study of the current educational needs in Pennsylvania, projecting out those needs over the next 25 years, and determining what can and should be done to help reform the current education system and prepare Pennsylvania for the future.

HB 816. Introduced by Representative P. Michael Sturla (D-Lancaster). This bill would include **trauma** as a factor in the school funding formula and removing significant barriers to learning. Referred to Education, March 8, 2021.

Impact: Would include chronic absenteeism, homelessness, and students living in foster care, definitive proxies of trauma that school districts are already mandated to measure, in the school funding formula based on the recommendations of the 2015 Basic Education Funding Commission Report.

HB 841. Introduced by Representative Anthony M. DeLuca (D-Allegheny). This bill would further provide **rights** and remedies of persons in mental health treatment. Referred to Human Services, March 9, 2021.

Impact: Would codify that mental health patients have the right to be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

HB 893. Introduced by Representative Liz Hanbidge (D-Montgomery). This bill would allow an election official to bring a paper ballot – or portable **voting** machine when available – to any voter outside the physical polling place who has a physical, emotional, intellectual, developmental disability or short-term inability that would preclude them from easily accessing

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voting machines. Referred to State Government, March 15, 2021.

Impact: Would allow an election official to bring a paper ballot – or portable voting machine when available – to any voter outside the physical polling place who has a physical, emotional, intellectual, developmental disability, or short-term inability that would preclude them from easily accessing a voting machine.

HB 909. Introduced by Representative Melissa Shusterman (D-Chester) and Representative Jessica Benham (D-Allegheny). This bill would allow parents of students with IEPs to repeat a school year or students who are aging out of services to opt-in for an **additional year due to loss of learning during COVID-19**. Referred to Education Committee, March 15, 2021.

Impact: Would allow parents to decide if their child with an IEP repeats the school year to address the loss of educational supports and services during COVID-19.

HB 975. Introduced by Representative Carrie Lewis DelRosso (R-Allegheny). This bill expands the crime of institutional **sexual assault** to cover elders, people with disabilities, and other care-dependent persons by those who have the responsibility of providing care. Referred to Judiciary, March 18, 2021. Final Passage [House], June 16, 2021. Final Passage with amendments [Senate], July 6, 2022. House Concurrence on Amendments, July 7, 2022. Approved by Governor, July 11, 2022, becoming **Act No. 61 of 2022**.

Impact: Would expand the crime of institutional sexual assault to include those who provide care to care-dependents individuals. Specifically, it would close the loophole for caregivers to use the defense of “consent” when they sexually assault an individual who is care-dependent and they are providing services to.

HB 1012. Introduced by Representative Timothy J. O’Neal (R-Washington). This bill intends to

preserve access to **ventilator care** in Pennsylvania by dedicating additional Medicaid funding to those facilities already demonstrating a significant commitment to caring for these Pennsylvanians. Referred to House Human Services March 25, 2021. Final passage, June 8, 2021. Referred to Senate Human Services June 9, 2021. Companion Bill **SB 959**, introduced by Senator Camera Bartolotta (R-Beaver).

Impact: Provides increased Medicaid funding to facilities that offer ventilator care in the Commonwealth to address an access to care crisis and incentives for facilities to expand geographic access. This will expand the ability for these care facilities to assist more individuals throughout the state.

HB 1016. Introduced by Representative Anthony M. DeLuca (D-Allegheny). This bill would provide for departmental powers and duties as to small **personal care homes**. Referred to Health, March 29, 2021.

Impact: Would extend two provisions of current regulations to small personal care homes to provide the Department of Human Services to inspect such facilities at least once annually unannounced, and those responsible for the small personal care home will be required to submit to a criminal background check. All small personal care homes will be registered.

HB 1115. Introduced by Representative Kate A. Klunk (R-York). This bill would provide for definitions and for medical assistance benefits for **workers with disabilities** and workers with medically improved disabilities. Referred to Health, April 7, 2021. Companion bill **SB 156**.

Impact: Would create a new category under MAWD that would allow for a higher earning level for an individual with disabilities who has participated in the MAWD program for the previous 12 consecutive months. Under this new category, individuals would contribute a larger percentage towards their medical assistance benefits and still be able to retain access

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to their benefits.

HB 1313. Introduced by Representative Michael J. Driscoll (D-Philadelphia). This bill would require wheelchairs and other **electrical mobility devices** to have red reflectors that will make them more visible to drivers. Referred to Transportation, April 30, 2021.

Impact: Would require wheelchairs and other electrical mobility devices to have red reflectors that will make them more visible to drivers in order to minimize tragic accidents.

HB 1329. Introduced by Representative Jason Ortity (R-Allegheny). This bill would require employers receiving tax credits, outside of educational tax credits, to implement a **hiring program** for individuals with disabilities. Referred to Finance, May 5, 2021.

Impact: Would require employers receiving tax credits, outside of educational tax credits, to implement a hiring program for individuals with disabilities.

HB 1356. Introduced by Representative Gary Day (R-Chester). This bill would raise the **rate of reimbursement for guardians**. Referred to Aging and Older Adult Services, May 7, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Human Services Code to increase the reimbursement rate for guardians of older adults from \$100 to \$300. This increase would still require federal approval under the state plan.

HB 1420. Introduced by Representative Wendi Thomas (R-Bucks). This bill provides **fiscal code language** for expenditures approved in the FY 2022-2023 PA State budget. Referred to Human Services, May 14, 2021. Final Passage [House], June 14, 2021. Final Passage with Amendments [Senate], July 7, 2022. House Concurrence of Amendments, July 7, 2022. Vetoed by the Governor, July 8, 2022, becoming **Veto No. 6 of 2022**.

Impact: Stipulates that the Office of Long Term

Living (OLTL) cannot utilize a single financial management system for 12 months following the passage of the bill.

HB 1421. Introduced by Representative Wendi Thomas (R-Bucks). This bill provides **fiscal code language** for expenditures approved in the FY 2022-2023 PA State budget. Referred to Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness, May 14, 2021. Final Passage [House], June 9, 2021. Final Passage with Amendments [Senate], June 20, 2022. House Concurrence of Senate Amendments as Amended by House Amendments, July 8, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 11, 2022, becoming **Act No. 54 of 2022**.

Impact: Stipulates funding for Department of Human Services, including the creation of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Augmentation Fund, in which the savings from the closure of PA's remaining state centers go to fund Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages, housing, and the Waiting List.

HB 1429. Introduced by Representative Lynda Schlegel Culver (R-Northumberland). This bill would provide for the offense of financial exploitation of an older adult or **care-dependent person**. Referred to House Aging and Older Adult Services, May 17, 2021. Final passage, June 15, 2021. Referred to Senate Judiciary, June 17, 2021. Approved by the Governor, June 30, 2021, becoming **Act No. 48 of 2021**.

Impact: Would give the Attorney General's office concurrent jurisdiction to investigate individuals who use their position of trust to financially exploit older adults and care-dependent people.

HB 1431. Introduced by Representative Kate A. Klunk (R-York). This bill would provide for the offense of **abuse of care-dependent person**. Referred to House Aging and Older Adult Services, May 17, 2021. Final passage, June 15, 2021. Referred to Senate Judiciary, June 17, 2021. Approved by the Governor, June 30,

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2021, becoming **Act No. 49 of 2021**.

Impact: Would establish abuse of social media by employees who post pictures of care dependent individuals without permission and categorize the crime as a misdemeanor

HB 1446. Introduced by Representative Curtis G. Sonney (R-Erie). This bill would allow an additional year of school for students who are aging out of **Special Education**. Referred to Education, May 20, 2021. Laid on the table, Nov. 10, 2021.

Impact: Would allow a students aging out of the special education system during the 2020-2021 school year the ability to attend the 2021-2022 school year to address loss of transition services during COVID-19.

HB 1500. Introduced by Representative Kate Klunk (R-York). This bill would amend the **Abortion Control Act** to prohibit the abortion of any child solely due to a diagnosis of possible Down Syndrome. Referred to House Health, May 19, 2021. Final Passage, June 8, 2021. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, June 9, 2021. First Consideration, June 21, 2021.

Impact: Would expand the current law to include the exception that a woman can obtain an abortion prior to 24 weeks gestational age for any reason if a physician deems it is necessary, except if the decision is due to a prenatal diagnosis that the unborn child has Down Syndrome.

HB 1561. Introduced by Representative Frank A. Farry (R-Bucks). This bill would amend the act of April 14, 1972 (P.L.221, No.63), known as the Pennsylvania **Drug and Alcohol Abuse Control Act**, further providing for definitions and for confidentiality of records. Referred to Human Services, June 7, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, Nov. 9, 2021. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, Nov. 10, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, June 30, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 7, 2022,

becoming **Act No. 32 of 2022**.

Impact: Would amend the MHPA to align with HIPAA standards in order to permit providers, facilities and health plans to more easily share patient mental health and substance use disorder-related information.

HB 1563. Introduced by Representative Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster). This bill would amend the act of July 9, 1976 (P.L.817, No.143), known as the **Mental Health Procedures Act**, in general provisions, further providing for definitions and for confidentiality of records. Referred to Human Services, June 7, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, Nov. 9, 2021. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, Nov. 10, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, June 30, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 7, 2022, becoming **Act No. 33 of 2022**.

Impact: Amends the DAACA to align with HIPAA standards in order to permit providers, facilities and health plans to more easily share patient mental health and substance use disorder-related information.

HB 1566. Introduced by Representative Dan L. Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would make an appropriation from the General Fund to the Department of Labor and Industry, Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, for the purpose of a Statewide program to facilitate communication for individuals who are **deafblind** for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021. Referred to Appropriations, June 25, 2021.

Impact: Would appropriate money from the General Fund during the 2021-2022 fiscal year for Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a statewide program to facilitate communication for individuals who are deafblind.

HB 1642. Introduced by Representative Martina White (R-Philadelphia). This bill provides educational **fiscal code language** for education expenditures approved in the FY 2022-2023 PA State budget. Referred to Education, June

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16, 2021. Final Passage [House], Oct. 5, 2021. Final Passage with Amendments [Senate], Dec. 14, 2021. House Concurrence of Senate Amendments as Amended by House Amendments, July 7, 2022. Senate Concurrence of House Amendments, July 7, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 8, 2022, becoming Act **No. 55 of 2022**.

Impact: Stipulates how education funding approved in the budget will be utilized, including allowing students with disabilities set to graduate during the 2021-2022 school year or aging out of special education between the 2021-2022 school year and the 2022-2023 school year, the ability to opt in to repeat a year due to lose of educational supports during COVID-19. Includes the creation of the Disability Inclusive Curriculum Pilot Program.

HB 1644. Introduced by Representative James B. Struzzi II (R-Indiana). This bill would direct the Department of Human Services to develop a statewide process to place patients, enrolled in Medicaid, with **behavioral health or other long-term care needs** in appropriate care settings in a timely matter. Referred to Health, June 16, 2021. Re-referred to Human Services, Nov. 16, 2021. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, June 1, 2022.

Impact: Would seek to address delays in the healthcare system by implementing solutions that provide better access to care and would develop a standardized process for the hospitals in referrals to treatment.

HB 1749. Introduced by Representative Rosemary Brown (R-Monroe). This bill would apply the **Special Education Funding Formula** to Cyber & Charter Schools. Referred to Education, July 20, 2021.

Impact: Would take the suggestion of the Special Education Funding Commission and apply the same special education funding principles used to distribute state special education funding to

school districts, in the calculation used to determine a school district's tuition payment for a special education student enrolled in a charter school.

HB 1783. Introduced by Representative Stephen Kinsey (D-Philadelphia). This bill would amend the Public School Code by adding **dyslexia** to what constitutes a disability. Referred to Education, Aug. 12, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the public school code by recognizing dyslexia as a disability, which would require schools to provide students with a diagnosis to receive specially designed instruction.

HB 1828. Introduced by Representative Bridget M. Kosierowski (D-Lackawanna). This bill would establish to better enable healthcare consumers to access quality and affordable **healthcare** and health insurance. Referred to Health, Sept. 1, 2021.

Impact: Would establish the Office of Healthcare Consumer Advocate, which will coordinate amongst, provide assistance to, and collect data from patient assistance programs and consumer help centers to better enable healthcare consumers to access quality and affordable healthcare and health insurance.

HB 1890. Introduced by Representative Mark Gillen (R-Berks). This bill would require **background checks** for individuals seeking to become guardians. Referred to Aging and Older Adult Services, Sept. 21, 2021.

Impact: Would require any individuals seeking to become a guardian to undergo a background check in order to prohibit those with a history of gross criminal behaviors to serve as guardians.

HB 1928. Introduced by Representative Gary Day (R-Chester). This bill would require the **appointment of counsel** to be mandatory in guardianship cases. Referred to Aging and Older Adult Services, Sept. 28, 2021.

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Impact: Would make the appointment of counsel for the individual being placed under guardianship mandatory to ensure the individuals rights are protected during a guardianship proceeding.

HB 1955. Introduced by Representative Gerald J. Mullery (D-Luzerne). This bill would provide for a Moratorium on Closing of White Haven and Polk **State Centers**. Referred to Health, Oct. 5, 2021.

Impact: Would halt the announced closure of Polk and White Haven State Center until all individuals eligible for a waiver have received it. Once all individuals have a waiver, a task force would be convened to make a plan. Only a majority vote of the task force would move the closure forward.

HB 1999. Introduced by Representative Liz Hanbidge (D-Montgomery). This bill would prevent deceptive interrogation tactics from being used on individuals with **autism and/or intellectual disabilities**. Referred to Judiciary, Oct. 21, 2021.

Impact: Would prevent deceptive interrogation tactics from being used on individuals with autism and/or intellectual disabilities, thus reducing the number of false convictions, and ensuring equality and dignity to all individuals.

HB 2022. Introduced by Representative Aaron D. Kaufer (R-Luzerne). This bill would allow a public school to place a behavioral health representative in a school who may communicate and interact with students to provide social and **mental health support** assistance. Referred to Education, March 9, 2022. Removed from table, June 8, 2022.

Impact: Would establish a grant pilot program for school districts to access funds to address mental health concerns and fund mental health services in schools.

HB 2023. Introduced by Representative Aaron

D. Kaufer (R-Luzerne). This bill would require the PA Department of Education (PDE) to develop a model curriculum to assist school entities in providing **behavioral health education**. Referred to Education, March 9, 2022. Laid on the table, April 25, 2022. Removed from table, June 8, 2022.

Impact: Would require the PA Department of Education, in consultation with at least one organization addressing behavioral health, to develop model behavioral health curriculum to be made available for use by school entities. Additionally, each school entity may provide four hours of training on behavioral health awareness to professional educators. The four hours of training may be applied to a professional educator's continuing professional education requirements.

HB 2024. Introduced by Representative Aaron D. Kaufer (R-Luzerne). This bill would commission a Mental Health Instruction Study to determine the extent to which schools are currently providing mental health instruction in their curriculum. Data collected from this study will serve as the basis for recommendations for the **improvement of mental health instruction** in our Commonwealth's schools, including recommending future legislation. Referred to Education, March 9, 2022. Re-committed to Appropriations, June 13, 2022.

Impact: Would utilize the data collected from this study to serve as the basis for recommendations for the improvement of mental health instruction in our Commonwealth's schools, including recommending future legislation.

HB 2067. Introduced by Representative Seth M. Grove (R-York). This bill would establish an independent office to handle and administer the state's **Medicaid** Program. Referred to Health, Nov. 9, 2021.

Impact: Would establish an independent office to handle and administer the state's Medicaid

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program by instituting the Office of Independent Medicaid Director, which would operate within the Department of Human Services with the director being nominated by the Governor and approved by the Senate.

HB 2071. Introduced by Representative Martin T. Causer (R-Mckean). This bill will provide **broadband Internet access** to unserved and underserved residents. Referred to Consumer Affairs, Nov. 9, 2021. Approved by the Governor, Dec. 22, 2021 becoming **Act 96 of 2021**.

Impact: Establishes the PA Broadband Development Authority to provide broadband is available across the state, especially to those areas that are unserved and underserved currently.

HB 2166. Introduced by Representative Malcolm Kenyatta (D-Philadelphia). This bill would provide for emergency relief to those who previously received support through the **General Assistance (GA) program**. Referred to Health, Dec. 13, 2021.

Impact: Would re-institute the General Assistance Program which provided \$200 on average a month to those who were unable to work, those caring for loved ones who were sick or disabled, veterans, women fleeing domestic violence, and adults receiving substance abuse treatment.

HB 2180. Introduced by Representative Dan Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would require schools to track the **inclusion of extracurricular activities**. Referred to Education, Jan. 27, 2022.

Impact: Would require school districts to track the inclusion of their extracurricular activities for students with disabilities from grade 6. It requires the school districts to produce a report of the findings that will be given to the PA Department of Education.

HB 2182. Introduced by Representative Dan Miller (D-Allegheny). This bill would codify the

right of people with disabilities in our Commonwealth to **accessible digital content** on all **state and local government websites**.

Impact: Would ensure that state and local government website are digitally accessible for individuals with disabilities in order to ensure access to the information and services needed.

HB 2293. Introduced by Representative Timothy R. Bonner (R-Mercer). This bill would require Contract **Health Care Service Agencies** who provide temporary employment in nursing homes, assisted living residences and personal care homes to register with the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a condition of their operations in Pennsylvania. Referred to Health, Jan. 27, 2022. Third consideration and final passage, July 1, 2022. Referred to Senate Health and Human Services, July 5, 2022. Approved by the Governor, Nov. 3, 2022 becoming **Act No. 128 of 2022**, Nov. 3, 2022.

Impact: Would ensure that Pennsylvania has oversight of supplemental health care service agencies who operate within the Commonwealth and offer temporary employment staff to those in long-term nursing facilities.

HB 2337. Introduced by Representative Jason Silvis (R-Westmoreland). This bill would create an online application and renewal process for **persons with disability placards**. Upon completion of an online application or renewal, the applicant will be provided a printable temporary placard to display in their vehicle until they receive the physical placard in the mail from the department. Referred to Transportation, Feb. 11, 2022. Third consideration and final passage, June 15, 2022. Referred to Senate Transportation, June 15, 2022.

Impact: Would allow for a disability placard registration and renewal to occur online.

HB 2425. Introduced by Representative Ann Flood (R-Northampton). This bill would provide for communication duties between the

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Department of Health and the Department of Human Services with certain agencies and the Department of Aging relating to **abuse** of adults and older adults. Referred to Aging and Older Adult Services, March 29, 2022. Final passage, Sept. 21, 2022. Referred to Aging and Youth, Sept. 21, 2022 [Senate].

Impact: Would ensure the coordination between the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and Department of Aging to ensure that abuse of older adults is correctly reported and the information is shared between agencies to keep individuals safer.

HB 2530. Introduced by Representative Jason Silvis (R-Indiana). This bill would permanently suspend the practice of **prudent pay** in the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). Referred to Human Services, April 21, 2022. Final Passage, May 25, 2022. Referred to Health and Human Services [Senate], June 1, 2022. First consideration, Oct. 18, 2022. Re-referred to Senate Appropriations Committee, Oct. 19, 2022.

Impact: Would permanently end the practice of prudent pay, which is where reimbursement submitted by providers to the Office of Developmental Programs is held for 21 days. The practice of prudent pay has been suspended since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

HB 2539. Introduced by Representative Johnathan D. Hershey (R-Juniata). This bill would clarify the Constitution's provisions on **absentee voting**, to allow Pennsylvania's electors to decide whether we should return to a system where most voters participate by voting at their polling place on Election Day. Referred to State Government, April 25, 2022.

Impact: Would set up a PA constitutional amendment vote to determine if mail-in voting can continue in Pennsylvania.

HB 2636. Introduced by Representative Darisha K. Parker (D-Philadelphia). This bill would

strengthen Pennsylvania's **guardianship** laws and is supported by both the Pennsylvania Bar Association and Disability Rights PA. Referred to Judiciary, June 1, 2022.

Impact: Would reform guardianship practice procedures in Pennsylvania by: 1.) Appointing counsel for alleged incapacitated persons when none has already been retained; 2.) Certifying professional guardians; 3.) Ensuring the courts first explore alternatives to guardianship; and 4.) Requiring that petitions for guardianship demonstrate that less restrictive alternatives were considered and why they are insufficient.

HB 2665. Introduced by Representative Kurt A. Masser (R-Northumberland). This bill would provide additional funding to PHARE; enabling more seniors, families of low and moderate income, and people with special **housing** needs to receive much-needed assistance. Referred to Urban Affairs, June 9, 2022. Re-committed to Appropriations, June 20, 2022.

Impact: Would enable PHARE to address the increased demand for this program which creates and preserves affordable rental housing unites for seniors, families of low and moderate income, and people with disabilities.

HB 2674. Introduced by Representative Jason Ortity (R-Westmoreland). This bill would provide for extended **special education** enrollment due to COVID-19. Referred to Education, June 14, 2022.

Impact: Would extend Act 66 of 2021 and allow students with disabilities who turned 21 during the 2021-2022 school year the ability to stay through their 22nd birthday and attend the 2022-2023 school year. Note: this legislative language was incorporated in the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year Budget package that was signed into law on July 8, 2022.

HB 2779. Introduced by Representative Ed Neilson (D-Philadelphia). This bill would establish the Long-Term Services and Supports

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Commission, the Long-Term Services and Supports Council and the **Long-Term Services and Supports Trust Fund**, imposing duties on the Department of Human Services and the Department of Revenue and imposing a payroll premium. Referred to Aging and Older Adult Services, Aug. 22, 2022.

Impact: Established a fund to provide up to \$36,500 in lifetime benefits to eligible beneficiaries for long term care services, such as respite care, in-home caregiving, time in a nursing home/assisted living facility, or home modifications.

HB 2824. Introduced by Representative Pamela A. DeLissio (D-Philadelphia). This bill would re-introduce **Pennsylvania Health Care Plan (PHCP)**. The PHCP uses a single payer plan to provide universal health coverage (UHC). Referred to Health, Sept. 16, 2022.

Impact: Would establish a system in which the Pennsylvania Health Care Agency administers a plan that ensures the cost-effective delivery of covered services that range from catastrophic care to wellness and preventative care. This system preserves the private practice of medicine and the right of patients to choose their healthcare providers.

SB 40. Introduced by Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York). This bill would integrate **behavioral health and physical health services** in Pennsylvania's Medicaid program, HealthChoices. Referred to Health and Human Services, Jan. 20, 2021.

Impact: Would coordinate mental health, substance abuse and primary care services in an effort to produce the best outcomes and best care for people with complex health needs.

SB 44. Introduced by Senator Katie J. Muth (D-Berks). This bill would provide emergency relief to those who previously received support through **General Assistance**. Referred to Health and Human Services, March 15, 2021.

Impact: Would establish the Emergency Relief Program, which is temporary emergency assistance for the most vulnerable populations with immediate and urgent needs. Specifically, Emergency Relief goes to people with disabilities who cannot work, people in treatment for a substance use disorder, orphaned children cared for by neighbors or friends, people fleeing domestic violence, qualified veterans or people caring for someone with a disability.

SB 94. Introduced by Senator Mario M. Scavullo (R-Monroe). This bill would provide for a **loan forgiveness** program for qualified college graduates entering the mental health, intellectual disability, and drug and alcohol treatment professions. Referred to Education, Jan. 22, 2021.

Impact: Would provide for a loan forgiveness program for qualified college graduates entering the mental health, intellectual disability, and drug and alcohol treatment professions.

SB 108. Introduced by Senator Camera Bartolotta (R-Beaver). This bill would intend to preserve access to **ventilator care** in Pennsylvania by dedicating additional Medicaid funding to those facilities already demonstrating a significant commitment to caring for these Pennsylvanians. Referred to Health and Human Services, Jan. 22, 2021. Final passage, April 28, 2021. Referred to House Health and Human Services, April 29, 2021. Final passage, June 25, 2021. Approved by the Governor, June 30, 2021, becoming Act No. 56.

Impact: Provides increased Medicaid funding to facilities that offer ventilator care in the Commonwealth to address an access to care crisis and incentives for facilities to expand geographic access. This will expand the ability for these care facilities to assist more individuals throughout the state.

SB 156. Introduced by Senator Bob Mensch (R-Berks). This bill would allow individuals

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with disabilities to increase earnings under a new category of MAWD, called **Workers with Job Success (WJS)**. Referred to Health and Human Services, Feb. 2, 2021. Final passage, May 11, 2021. Referred to House Health May 17, 2021. Final passage, June 25, 2021. Signed by the Governor, July 1, 2021, Act No. 69.

Impact: Would create a new category under MAWD that would allow for a higher earning level for an individual with disabilities who has participated in the MAWD program for the previous 12 consecutive months. Under this new category, individuals would contribute a larger percentage towards their medical assistance benefits and still be able to retain access to their benefits.

SB 195. Introduced by Senator Judy Ward (R-Blair). This bill would revise the **Caregiver Support Program (CSP)** to enhance the services provided to families and caregivers. Referred to Aging and Youth, Feb. 10, 2021.

Impact: Would update the PA Family Caregiver Support Act in the following ways: removes the statutory Caregiver Support Program (CSP) monthly care plan cost cap, allowing it to be set by the department; removes the \$300 monthly aggregate average reimbursement limit for all CSP cases; removes the CSP home modification lifetime limit, allowing it to be set by the Department; and updates terminology and definitions to include caregivers of individuals with disabilities.

SB 255. Introduced by Senator Patrick Browne (R-Lehigh). **Budget** bill for fiscal year July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. Referred to Appropriations, Feb. 22, 2021. Presented to the Governor, June 28, 2021. Approved by the Governor, June 30, 2021 becoming **Act No. 1A**.

Impact: Establishes the appropriation of funding from the General Fund for the 2021-2022 State Budget.

SB 367. Introduced by Christine M. Tartaglione

(D-Philadelphia). This bill would create the **Office for People with Disabilities** within and to be administered by the Office of the Governor and make the office permanent by statute. Referred to State Government, March 12, 2021.

Impact: Would permanently establish the Office for People with Disabilities within and to be administered by the Office of the Governor.

SB 404. Introduced by Senator Lisa M. Boscola (D-Lehigh). This bill would provide for **voter's bill of rights**. Referred to State Government, March 11, 2021.

Impact: Would create a Statement of Voter's Rights and require that the State of Voter's Rights be visible in all voter registration offices and polling places.

SB 427. Introduced by Senator John R. Gordner (R-Columbia). This bill would amend the **Pennsylvania Affordable Housing Act** to reestablish an exemption to state prevailing wage rates for certain federally funded housing grants. Referred to Urban Affairs and Housing, March 15, 2021.

Impact: Would amend the Pennsylvania Affordable Housing Act to reestablish an exemption to state prevailing wage rates for certain federally funded housing grants.

SB 474. Introduced by Senator Michele Brooks (R-Crawford). This bill would allow constituents to obtain a **disability placard** in their respective legislative district offices rather than waiting to receive them in the mail. Referred to Transportation, March 23, 2021. First Consideration, Oct. 27, 2021.

Impact: Would allow individuals to obtain handicap parking placards in their respective legislative district offices rather than receiving them in the mail from PennDOT.

SB 617. Introduced by Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This bill would extend rights

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of the federal **Family and Medical Leave Act** (FMLA) to siblings, grandparents and grandchildren in certain, specific cases. Referred to Labor and Industry, May 3, 2021. Third consideration and final passage, June 15, 2022. Referred to House Labor and Industry, June 16, 2022.

Impact: Would provide up to six weeks of protected, unpaid leave to an employee to care for a sibling, grandparent or grandchild with a certified terminal illness if such sibling, grandparent or grandchild has no living spouse, no child over 17 years of age or no parent under 65 years of age.

SB 664. Introduced by Senator Jake Corman (R-Centre). This bill would all students aging out of the special education system during the 2020-2021 school year to receive an **additional year** and allows any K-12 student the ability to **repeat their grade level** in the 2021-2022 school year due to the impact of COVID-19. Referred to Senate Education, May 7, 2021. Final Passage, May 12, 2021. Referred to House Education, May 17, 2021. Final Passage with amendments, June 23, 2021. Senate Concurrence Vote, June 24, 2021. Signed by Governor Wolf, June 30, 2021, becoming **Act No. 66 of 2021**.

Impact: Would allow students aging out of the special education system during the 2020-2021 school year the ability to attend the 2021-2022 school year to address loss of transition services during COVID-19. Also, will enable parents to elect to have their K-12 child repeat their grade level in the 2021-2022 school year.

SB 704. Introduced by Senator Lisa Baker (R-Lackawanna). This bill expands the crime of institutional **sexual assault**. Referred to Senate Judiciary, May 21, 2021. Second Consideration, June 25, 2021.

Impact: Would expand the crime of institutional sexual assault to include those who provide care to care-dependent individuals. Specifically,

it would close the loophole for caregivers to use the defense of “consent” when they sexually assault an individual who is care-dependent and they are providing services to.

SB 705. Introduced by Senator Elder Vogel (R-Beaver). This bill would allow for the continuation of the use of **Telemedicine** in the Commonwealth. Referred to Banking & Insurance, May 21, 2021. Final Passage, Oct. 26, 2021. Referred to House Insurance, Oct. 27, 2021.

Impact: Would define telemedicine, offering guidelines outlining who can provide telemedicine services, and providing clarity around insurance company reimbursement for these services.

SB 829. Introduced by Senator John T. Yudi-chak (D-Carbon). This bill would establish the **Livable Home Tax Credit**. This legislation will benefit residents, especially senior and disabled residents, who seek to make home modifications that would improve accessibility and enable them to remain at their current residence. Referred to Finance, July 26, 2021.

Impact: Would establish the Livable Home Tax Credit, which will allow eligible homeowners may receive a tax credit up to \$2,000 for accessibility features in a new residence or 50% of the amount expended (up to \$2,000) to complete renovations to an existing residence. During the second year of the program, the maximum tax credit would increase to \$5,000. This proposal would cap the amount of credits awarded under this article at \$1 million.

SB 844. Introduced by Senator John Kane (D-Chester). This bill would establish student **Mental Health Days**. Referred to Education, Aug. 27, 2021.

Impact: Would allow students to take excused absences for mental health reasons. The number of mental health days will be equal to the number of excuses for nonattendance

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authorized by the school district for a physical reason.

SB 878. Introduced by Senator Dave Argall (R-Schuylkill) and Senator Sharif Street (D-Philadelphia). This bill will implement recommendations for **Election Reform**. Referred to State Government, September 17, 2021.

Impact: Would implement reforms recommended following the hearings on the 2020 Election. Key issues addressed are: pre-canvassing mail-in ballots, tracking mail-in ballots, counting mail-in ballots, application deadlines for mail-in ballots, elimination of permanent mail-in list, real-time reporting of deceased voters, drop boxes, and training election workers.

SB 924. Introduced by Senator Michele Brooks (R-Crawford). This bill would institute a moratorium on the scheduled closing of the Polk and White Haven **State Centers**. Referred to Health and Human Services, Oct. 26, 2021. Final Passage, Dec. 15, 2021. Referred to Health [House], Dec. 22, 2021. First Consideration [House], June 28, 2022.

Impact: Would halt the announced closure of Polk and White Haven State Center for at least 5 years. Institutes a task force to review the impact of the planned closure to the residents, staff, and local economy. A closure can only move forward once a majority vote of the task force approves the closure.

SB 965. Introduced by Senator Wayne Lang-erholc Jr. (R-Bradford). This bill would provide for highly **automated vehicles** and evaluate improvements to accessibility and mobility for persons with disabilities. Referred to Transportation, Jan. 5, 2022. First consideration, Jan. 26, 2022.

Impact: The Advisory Committee will be tasked with producing a report that evaluates improvements to accessibility and mobility for persons with disabilities.

SB 995. Introduced by Senator Carolyn Comitta (D-Chester). This bill would apply **hate crimes protections** for individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities in Pennsylvania. Referred to Judiciary, Dec. 29, 2021.

Impact: Would expand Pennsylvania's hate crimes protections to individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities.

SB 1060. Introduced by Senator Vincent J. Hughes (D-Montgomery). An Act to provide **appropriations from the General Fund** for the expenses for the fiscal year July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. Referred to Appropriations, Feb. 18, 2022 [Senate].

Impact: Establishes the appropriation of funding from the General Fund for the 2022-2023 State Budget.

SB 1100. Introduced by Senator Patrick Browne (R-Lehigh). An Act to provide **appropriations from the General Fund** for the expenses for the fiscal year July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. Referred to Appropriations, Feb. 28, 2022. Third consideration and final passage, June 14, 2022. Re-referred to House Appropriations, June 20, 2022. Final Passage [House], July 7, 2022. Senate Concurrence on House Amendments, July 8, 2022. Approved by the Governor, July 8, 2022, becoming **Act No. 1A of 2022**.

Impact: Establishes the appropriation of funding from the General Fund for the 2022-2023 State Budget.

SB 1135. Introduced by Senator Nikil Saval (D-Philadelphia). This bill would provide for funding to address habitability concerns in owner-occupied and rental units and make units accessible for individuals with disabilities, and removing barriers to affordability of homeownership; establishing the **Whole-Home Repairs and Homeownership Affordability Program**. Referred to Urban Affairs and Housing, March 7, 2022. First consideration, June 20, 2022.

Impact: Would create a Whole Home Repairs Fund administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development. The Fund will allow providers to assess and address homes holistically by creating a one-stop shop for home repairs. DCED will solicit competitive proposals from nonprofit and public sector organizations seeking to enhance existing programs. Incorporated into the 2022-2023 Fiscal Budget Legislation that was signed into law on July 8th.

SB 1151. Introduced by Senator Wayne Langerholc Jr. (R-Bedford). This bill would amend the act of July 9, 1976 (P.L.817, No.143), known as the Mental Health Procedures Act, providing for duty to warn. Referred to Health and Human Services, March 17, 2022.

Impact: Would codify a mental health care practitioner's duty to warn of a specific and immediate threat of serious bodily injury. Will establish clear guidance as to when and who to contact when a patient communicates a propensity to harm an individual or group of individuals.

SB 1198. Introduced by Senator Michele Brooks (R-Crawford). This bill would amend the act of June 13, 1967 (P.L.31, No.21), known as the Human Services Code, in departmental powers and duties as to licensing, providing for pre-licensure waiver of physical site requirements and further providing for regulations and for rules and regulations for **personal care home and assisted living residences**. Referred to Health and Human Services, April 26, 2022. Re-referred to Appropriations, June 8, 2022.

Impact: Would amend Act 56 of 2007's requirements for Assisted Living Residences (ALRs) to improve availability of ALRs to those who wish to access them.

SB 1254. Introduced by Senator Elder A. Vogel Jr. (R-Beaver). This bill would provide additional funding to PHARE; enabling more

seniors, families of low and moderate income, and people with special **housing** needs to receive much-needed assistance. Referred to Urban Affairs, June 9, 2022. Re-committed to Appropriations, June 20, 2022.

Impact: Impact: Would enable PHARE to address the increased demand for this program which creates and preserves affordable rental housing unites for seniors, families of low and moderate income, and people with disabilities.

SB 1269. Introduced by Senator John I. Kane (D-Chester). This bill would provide for State-wide children's **mental health** ombudsman. Referred to Aging and Youth, June 14, 2022. Companion legislation House Bill 404.

Impact: creates a statewide children's mental health ombudsman. The ombudsman would have authority and duties to: 1.) Advocate on behalf of children with mental health issues; 2.) Identify barriers to effective mental health treatment; 3.) Monitor compliance with laws pertaining to children's behavioral health services; and 4.) Receive, investigate, and attempt to resolve complaints regarding violations by regulated entities and government agencies that may have an adverse impact upon the health, safety, welfare or rights of children.

SB 1276. Introduced by Senator Ryan P. Aument (R-Lancaster). This bill would provide for extended **special education** enrollment due to COVID-19. Referred to Education, June 17, 2022.

Impact: Would extend Act 66 of 2021, and allow any student with disabilities between the ages of 18-21 during the 2021-2022 school year the ability to stay through their 22nd birthday due to the impact of COVID-19.

SB 1304. Introduced by Senator Amanda M. Cappelletti (D-Delaware). This bill would require state-owned buildings and certain places of public accommodation, including auditoriums,

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convention centers, sports arenas, and amusement parks with a maximum occupancy of 2,000 or more people, to install and maintain at least one **adult changing station**. Referred to Labor and Industry Committee, July 21, 2022.

Impact: Would allow for individuals with disabilities greater dignity and privacy as well as freedom for themselves and their families to travel and be included in their local communities.

SB 1333. Introduced by Senator Lisa Baker (R-Luzerne). This bill would strengthen and modernize Pennsylvania **guardianship laws**. Referred to Judiciary, Sept. 13, 2022. First consideration, Sept. 20, 2022.

Impact: Would modernize Pennsylvania's guardianship laws by 1.) requiring the appointment of counsel to represent the individual being placed under guardianship; 2.) require that evidence is shown that lesser restrictive alternatives were considered and why they will not work; and 3.) the certification of individuals seeking to become guardians of 3 or more individuals.

Resolutions

HR 47. Introduced by Representative Melissa L. Shusterman (D-Chester). This resolution would increase the fee paid to **guardians** from \$100 to \$300. Referred to Judiciary, Feb. 9, 2021.

HR 49. Introduced by Representative Francis X. Ryan (R-Lebanon). This resolution urges Congress of the United States to fund the costs associated with **special education**. Referred to Education, Feb. 10, 2021.

HR 50. Introduced by Representative Liz Hanbidge (D-Montgomery). This resolution urges Congress to expand Medicare coverage to include **hearing aids**. Referred to Insurance, Feb. 10, 2021.

HR 54. Introduced by Representative Brian Sims (D-Philadelphia). This resolution recognizes **discrimination** against women, people

of color, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups as a public health issue threatening the safety of Pennsylvanians. Referred to Health, Feb. 17, 2021.

HR 72. Introduced by Representative P. Michael Sturla (D-Lancaster). This resolution would conduct a comprehensive study to find an age-appropriate measuring tool that our 500 school districts can use to measure, track, and combat **trauma** with the necessary support services. Referred to Education, March 8, 2021.

HR 138. Introduced by Representative Karen Boback (R-Luzerne). This resolution directs the Joint State Government Commission to **study special education lawsuits** in our Commonwealth. Referred to Education, September 15, 2021.

HR 212. Introduced by Representative Frank A. Farry (R-Berks). A Resolution establishing a legislative task force on **intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, and autism** and directing the Joint State Government Commission to study the impact of this Commonwealth's current delivery of services to individuals with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities and autism and to report its findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives. Amended and Adopted, June 29, 2022.

SR 39. Introduced by Senator Scott Martin (R-Lancaster). This resolution designates March 21, 2021 as "World Down Syndrome Day" in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules & Executive Nominations Committee, March 11, 2021.

SR 140. Introduced by Senator Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This Resolution designates June 21 through June 30, 2021, as **Disability Pride Week** in Pennsylvania. This week is designed to change the way people think about and define "disability." Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations, June 24, 2021.

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SR 175. Introduced by Senator Christine Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This resolution would recognize October 2021 as **Disability Employment Awareness Month** in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, September 19, 2021.

SR 235. Introduced by Senator Christine Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). This resolution designates March 2022 as **Disability Awareness Month** in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations, March 3, 2022.

SR 288. Introduced by Senator Judy Ward (R-Blair). A Resolution directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study of long-term care facilities' impact relating to **Medicaid** funds in this Commonwealth. Referred to Aging and Youth, May 3, 2022. Adopted, June 21, 2022.

SR 318. Introduced by Senator Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). A Resolution designating the week of June 6 through 11, 2022, as "**Disability Pride Week**" in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations, June 21, 2022.

SR 339. Introduced by Senator Christine M. Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia). A Resolution designating October 2022 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations, September 19, 2022.

SR 363. Introduced by Senator Scott Martin (R-Lancaster). This resolution recognizes the month of October 2022 as "**Down Syndrome Awareness Month**" in Pennsylvania. Referred to Rules and Executive Nominations, Oct. 14, 2022.

National News

Federal Budget Update

On Friday, December 23rd, the Federal

Government came to an agreement to fund the government for the 2022-2023 fiscal year which runs October 1, 2022-September 30, 2023. Some key impacts of this budget to the disability community include:

- Extension of the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program until 2027. The MFP program provides grants to states to transition Medicaid participants from institutions and into communities.
- Expanding the ABLE Account Eligibility by increasing the age of disability onset to access an ABLE account from prior to 26 to age 46, starting in 2026.
- Creating a path to ban the use of electric shock devices for behavior modification on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This practice is still only used in one institution in Massachusetts.
- Extending the requirement that states apply Medicaid's spousal impoverishment protections to HCBS through 2027. A spouse shouldn't have to live in poverty for their partner to receive services in the community.

2022 Midterm Elections Recap: Democrats Maintain Control of Senate, Republicans Regain Control of House

The 2022 midterm elections were held this month to determine control of the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, and many local and state offices. With most races officially called, it is clear that Democrats will keep control of the Senate and Republicans will gain control of the House.

Current House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and Majority Whip James Clyburn announced that they will not run for leadership positions, paving the way for a new Democratic leadership

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team. Members of the House will vote to elect a new speaker in January 2023.

Representative Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) is running for House speaker but needs the majority of Congress (218 votes) to support him. With the changes in the House majority, there will also be new leaders of the key House Committees. In the lead up to the election, Representative McCarthy expressed his intention to use cuts to Social Security and Medicare to pay for an upcoming needed debt ceiling increase.

Congress Fails to Block Use of Shock on Residents With Disabilities at Judge Rotenberg Center

Congressional leaders passed a bill to fund the Food and Drug Administration for another five years. Unfortunately, this bill did not include the ban on the use of electric shock devices for behavior modification on people with disabilities. The brutal treatment is widely recognized as cruel, harmful, and ineffective. Yet, the Judge Rotenberg Center (JRC), an institution in Massachusetts for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, still subjects its residents to this extreme practice.

DHS Announces Extension of REAL ID Full Enforcement Deadline

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced its intent to extend the REAL ID full enforcement date by 24 months, from May 3, 2023 to May 7, 2025. Under the new regulations published to execute this change, states will now have additional time to ensure their residents have driver's licenses and identification cards that meet the security standards established by the REAL ID Act. As required by the law, following the enforcement deadline, federal agencies, including the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), will be prohibited from accepting driver's licenses and identification

cards that do not meet these federal standards.

Read the press release [here](#).

How Some Doctors Discriminate Against Patients with Disabilities

NPR's Mary Louise Kelly talks with Lisa Iezzoni, Professor of Medicine at Harvard, about a new study [in the journal *Health Affairs*](#) that finds some doctors don't want patients with disabilities.

Listen [here](#).

Amicus Brief Filed in U.S. Supreme Court Case Emphasizes Harms to People with Disabilities

Six leading disability advocacy organizations, with the support of Kellogg Hansen, have filed a ["friend-of-the-court" brief](#) in the U.S. Supreme Court in support of the estate of Gorgi Talevski, who alleges that the Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County, Indiana (HHC) abused and neglected him while in a nursing home. The amicus brief explains why it is important that individuals, particularly those with disabilities, have the ability to sue state and local governments when their civil rights are violated under Medicaid and other public programs.

Read more [here](#).

House Passes Bill to Eliminate Barriers for Students With Disabilities in Higher Education

At the end of September, the House of Representatives passed the Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act [\[H.R. 4786\]](#) led by Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR). This is part of the larger Mental Health Matters Act [\[H.R.7780\]](#), which is led by Representative Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA). The RISE Act would eliminate barriers that students with

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disabilities face when accessing accommodations in higher education.

Bill Introduced to Remove the R-Word From Federal Law

Representative Mark Pocan [D-WI-2] introduced the “Words Matter Act of 2022” [[H.R.8863](#)]. Although the “R-word” was stripped from most federal statutes more than a decade ago, there are more than two dozen instances where the term appears in U.S. code. This bipartisan bill would update these laws with the term “intellectual disability.”

Bill Introduced To Clarify Civil Rights Remedies

Senators Patty Murray (D-WA) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced the [Clarifying Civil Rights Remedies Act of 2022](#). This legislation is in response to the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in *Cummings v. Premier Rehab Keller*, which narrowed protections available under the Rehabilitation Act and the Affordable Care Act to exclude emotional distress damages. This legislation would clarify that damages for emotional harm are available to victims of discrimination.

More information on the bill can be found [here](#).

Bill Introduced To Protect Family Caregivers From Discrimination

Senator Cory Booker (D-N.J.) reintroduced the [Protecting Family Caregivers from Discrimination Act \(S.5136\)](#), legislation that would expand protections for family caregivers from discrimination by their employers. Currently, many caregivers are ineligible for any form of protection under federal law and continue to face discrimination in the workplace due to their family caregiving responsibilities. The legislation would prohibit employers from firing or taking other adverse employment action against workers who are caregivers for their loved ones.

Bill Introduced To Support the Use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Senator Casey (D-PA), along with six other Democratic Senators, introduced the [Augmentative and Alternative Communications Centers to Establish National Training \(AACENT\) Act \(S. 2\)](#). This bill supports national training, resource centers, and technical assistance to support individuals with significant expressive communication disabilities. This legislation would support the use of Augmentative and Alternative (AAC) devices, which are used to supplement or replace verbal speech.

Free Online Courses Now Available from the National Adult Protective Services Training Center

The [National Adult Protective Services Training Center \(NATC\)](#), funded by Administration for Community Living (ACL) and administered by the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA), provides self-paced eLearning courses for APS professionals throughout the United States. While designed to support APS professionals, the NATC is also available to allied professionals interested in learning more about adult maltreatment and the work of APS.

Learn more and register [here](#).

House Committee Holds Hearing on Accessibility in Air Travel for Passengers With Disabilities

The U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a hearing titled “Accessible Air Travel: Addressing Challenges for Passengers With Disabilities.” The hearing included testimony from Representative James Langevin (D-RI) and advocates from across the country who spoke about barriers they faced when trying to navigate air travel.

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Learn more [here](#).

Letter Sent to States on Highly Mobile Children with Disabilities

The U.S. Department of Education (**ED**) **released a letter to State Directors of Special Education to “address concerns expressed by stakeholders regarding the unique educational needs of highly mobile children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).”** ED notes that highly mobile children include children and youth experiencing frequent moves into new school districts, such as military-connected children, migratory children, children who are homeless, and children in the foster care system. Also provided by ED are an updated list of resources and guidance to help states, districts, families and others uphold the rights of highly mobile children with disabilities.

Pediatricians Get New Guidance On Cerebral Palsy

“A pair of major health organizations are issuing new guidance to doctors about how to identify children with cerebral palsy and appropriately treat the condition.

In a **clinical report** and an **executive summary** published online this month in the Journal of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine said it’s critical for kids to be screened and identified early to ensure the best outcomes.”

Read article [here](#).

ACL Awards \$125 Million in Grants for Vaccination Programs for Older Adults and People with Disabilities

The Administration for Community Living awarded two grants totaling \$125 million to rapidly increase the number of older adults

and people with disabilities who have received the updated COVID-19 vaccine and annual flu vaccine. These programs will distribute funding and leverage partnerships across the aging and disability networks to host community vaccine clinics, provide in-home vaccinations, provide transportation to vaccination sites, conduct outreach and education to older adults and disabled people, and more. Funding to start these crucial activities will begin to reach communities in the coming weeks.

These grants reflect the Biden-Harris Administration’s ongoing commitment to supporting communities in providing vaccinations, testing, and treatment and are an important part of the Administration’s **COVID-19 Winter Preparedness Plan.**”

Resources

ODP Launches New Program - Just SO (Short-term Online) Speech Services

ODP has funded online Speech and Language Pathology services through TechOWL at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University. Individuals and their families/teams can receive up to 10 hours of virtual services from a licensed and certified speech-language pathologist (SLP). A SLP can work with your team to:

- Assess current communication
- Recommend a communication focus
- Develop a communication support plan
- Teach practical strategies for communication
- Select, set up, and/or customize a communication device, if recommended
- Plan for getting an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) device, including writing an insurance report, if

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necessary

- Troubleshoot communication strategies, AAC devices, and more

If you are interested in this new, free program go to <https://aacccommunity.net/so-speech-odp/>. For questions, contact TechOWL at 1-800-204-7428 or techowl@temple.edu.

Disability Service Provider Crisis Worsening, Survey Finds

“Disability service providers across the nation are overwhelmingly turning away new referrals, shutting down programs and services and struggling to maintain standards and there’s no relief in sight.”

Read the [Findings](#).

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Carers of those with Profound and Multiple Intellectual Disabilities

“Family carers of people with profound and multiple intellectual disabilities (PMID) experienced a reduction in healthcare services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many subsequently turned to Non-Governmental Organizations who worked to support families. However, little research has sought to capture the experiences of family carers or identify effective interventions which might support them. To address these concerns we explored the views of Non-Governmental sector workers across the UK and Ireland who supported families people with PMID during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also sought to explore their views on the characteristics of online support programmes for family carers.”

Read the research [here](#)

Earlybird Registration for the Charting the LifeCourse Showcase is Now Open

Registration for the Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) Showcase is now open. The CtLC Showcase is the annual event hosted by the LifeCourse Nexus – a national training and technical assistance center – which is housed at the University of Missouri – Kansas City Institute for Human Development.

The 7th Annual CtCL Showcase will take place May 2-4, 2023. Contribute to the energy from fellow advocates, family leaders, professionals and other stakeholders on a journey of learning, sharing and networking around the Charting the LifeCourse Framework and Tools.

Earlybird Registration is \$350.

Learn more and register [here](#).

PA Assistive Technology Foundation Publishes Financial Education Publications

The Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF) has issued new editions of its *Cents and Sensibility* and the accompanying educators manual. The 7th edition of *Cents and Sensibility: A Guide to Money Management* addresses the financial education needs of people with disabilities, while providing strategies, activities, and resources for anyone who wants to have control over their money.

The book provides the tools people need to make informed financial decisions and tackles financial topics like how to save for the future without losing benefits that impact individuals with disabilities.

The [*Educator Companion Manual, 2nd Edition*](#), aligns with chapters from [*Cents and Sensibility*](#), and provides educators and instructors with strategies for addressing the unique financial education needs of students

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with disabilities.

Each section in the Manual includes topic objectives, key terms, and essential questions, which provide guidance for teaching the lessons included in **Cents and Sensibility**.

The **Educator Companion Manual** helps anyone taking on an educator's role to engage all students in financial education. The Manual includes financial education topics such as earning, saving, credit, and decision making. The instructional materials correlate with the National Standards for Financial Education and Pennsylvania Academics Standards.

Download the PATF Cents and Sensibilities Manual

Download the Educators Companion Manual

IIDDEAL Project Seeks People With Disabilities To Participate in Study

The IIDDEAL project wants to learn what parts of health are most important to people with IDD. Participants will be compensated at the end of the process and the information will be shared with clinicians, insurers, and researchers to improve health care for people with disabilities.

Learn more [here](#).

Blind Institute of Technology Academy Salesforce Training Program

The Blind Institute of Technology (BIT) Academy offers training courses for people with disabilities to teach the knowledge and skills necessary to gain industry recognized certifications in IT and related fields. Open Inclusion has partnered with BIT to offer 75 individuals with disabilities the opportunity to become an authorized training provider in Salesforce. Training is provided at no cost to participants who are

accepted into the cohort, and at the end of the training, students can test for certification and apprenticeships.

Learn more [here](#).

Affordable Connectivity Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is an Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that provides funds and discounts for families and households struggling to afford internet service. You are likely eligible if your household's income is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line. **Click here to check your household's eligibility**.

Eligible households may receive assistance of up to \$30 a month in discounts for broadband service, and/or a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop, computer, or tablet purchased through a participating provider.

Click here to apply for the Affordable Connectivity Program and learn more.

Education Department Releases Blog Series on Discipline and Behavior of Students With Disabilities

The Director of the Office of Special Education Programs at the Department of Education released a new blog series around discipline and behavior of students with disabilities.

Access the blog series [here](#).

Study on Waiting Lists for Home and Community-Based Services from 2016 to 2021

The Kaiser Family Foundation analyzed data from states across the US on their use of Waiting Lists for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS).

Read the report [here](#).

Go to our digital version of Slice at <https://www.paddc.org/publications/slice-of-pie/> to access the links.

Blog Series - Creating Robust Provider Networks to Support Older Adults and People with Disabilities: Considerations for Medicaid Health Plans in California and Nationwide

This blog post reviews considerations to strengthen provider networks in California to ensure that older adults and people with disabilities receive services that meet their needs. The post focuses on strategies for partnering with three key provider types: (1) community-based organizations; (2) institutional long-term care facilities; and (3) Medicare providers. Lessons from California can help inform other states and Medicaid managed care organizations across the country.

Access the blog post [here](#).

Office of Developmental Programs Releases External Acronym Guide

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is distributing an updated Acronym Guide for external stakeholders. The guide is current as of December 29, 2022.

If there are additional acronyms that you would like to have added to the Guide, please feel free to submit them to the ODP Outreach mailbox (ra-pwodp_outreach@pa.gov). The Guide will be updated periodically to allow for the addition of new acronyms.

Access the guide [here](#).

Contact PIE

Contact the PIE Team with any questions, comments, suggestions, or information to share at PIE, c/o The Arc of Pennsylvania, 1007 Mumma Road, Suite 100, Lemoyne, PA 17043, by email at pie@thearcpa.org or by phone at 800-692-7258.

- o **A Slice of Pie** is available by email and contains hyperlinks for ease of accessing websites and internet documents and resources.
- o PIE Alerts, PIE Information, and PIE Job Postings are available by email to keep people informed about disability issues between newsletters.
- o Sign up for A Slice of Pie or PIE electronic messages by phone at 800-692-7258 or by emailing pie@thearcpa.org.
- o Individuals who already get A Slice of Pie and/or PIE electronic messages can make changes at any time by clicking "Update Profile/Email Address" at the end of any PIE email message.
- o A Slice of Pie is available at the Developmental Disabilities Council website www.paddc.org, by clicking on "Publications" and "Slice of Pie". Archived editions can also be found there.
- o **A Slice of Pie** is available in alternate format upon request.
- o The PIE office will download, copy, and mail information mentioned in A Slice of Pie upon request.

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Change of Information?

We want to be certain that you do not miss an issue of *A Slice of Pie*, so please send name or address changes either by phone 800-692-7258 or by email to pie@thearcpcpa.org. Thank you.

The PIE Team

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