

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

Governor Shapiro and Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis Sworn In

On January 17th, Josh Shapiro was officially sworn in as Pennsylvania’s 48th Governor and Austin Davis as the 35th Lieutenant Governor.

PA House and Senate Hold Special Elections

On January 31st, a special election for a Senate seat that serves all of Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, and Snyder counties and part of Luzerne County was held. Previous State Representative Lynda Schlegel Culver won the race, opening her House seat for another special election.

On February 7th, three special elections took

place in Allegheny County for the House of Representatives. All three seats went to Democrats (Joe McAndrew – House District 32, Abigail Salisbury – House District 34, and Matt Gergely – House District 35). This gave Democrats a slim majority in the PA House of Representatives.

On May 16th, there will be two more special elections. One is being held in Delaware County for a vacant House seat, and the other is being held in Montour & Northumberland Counties.

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Governor Shapiro Announces his Cabinet Nominee List

Each nominee listed is serving as acting secretary until confirmed by the Pennsylvania Senate.

Secretary of Education: Dr. Khalid Mumin

Secretary of Labor and Industry: Nancy Walker

Secretary of Human Services: Dr. Val Arkoosh

Secretary of Health: Dr. Debra L. Bogen

Secretary of Policy and Planning: Akbar Hossain

Secretary of Legislative Affairs: Mike Vereb

[Read full list here](#)

House Names Committee Chairs

House Democratic Majority Chairs

Rep. Jordan Harris – Appropriations

Rep. Donna Bullock – Children and Youth

Rep. Peter Schweyer – Education

Rep. Daniel Frankel – Health

Rep. Stephan Kinsey – Human Services

Rep. Jason Dawkins – Labor and Industry

Rep. Ed Neilson – Transportation

House Republican Minority Chairs

Rep. Seth Grove – Appropriations.

Rep. Lynda Schlegel Culver – Children and Youth.

Rep. Jesse Topper – Education.

Rep. Kathy Rapp – Health.

Rep. Doyle Heffley – Human Services.

Rep. Ryan Mackenzie – Labor and Industry.

Rep. Kerry Benninghoff – Transportation.

Senate Names Committee Chairs

Senate Republican Majority Chairs

Senator Scott Martin – Appropriations

Senator David Argall – Education

Senator Michelle Brooks – Health and Human Services

Senator Devlin Robinson – Labor and Industry

Senator Wayne Langerholc – Transportation

Senate Democratic Minority Chairs

Senator Vincent Hughes – Appropriations

Senator Lindsey Williams – Education

Senator Art Haywood – Health and Human Services

Senator John Kane – Labor and Industry

Senator Marty Flynn – Transportation

PA House Elects Speaker of the House

Following the resignation of Representative Mark Rozzi from the position, Joanna McClinton was elected Speaker of the House. She is the first woman, and first black woman to hold this position. She was elected by 102 Democrats and 0 Republicans.

Governor Shapiro Delivers Proposed Budget Address

On Tuesday, March 7th Governor Shapiro delivered his budget address. There is an outlined \$44 billion budget.

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

Department of Education:

Special Education got a proposed 103 million dollar increase which is a 7.8% increase from the previous fiscal year.

Early Intervention (3-5) received a proposed 10.3 million dollar increase which is a 3% increase from the previous fiscal year.

Department of Human Services:

ID State Centers got a proposed 12 million dollar decrease which is 10.8% less than the previous fiscal year.

ICF/ID got a received 29.5 million dollar increase which is a 19.5% increase from the previous fiscal year.

ID (Community Base) received a 7.899 million dollar increase which is a 5.4% increase from the previous fiscal year.

ID (Community Waiver) received a 384 million dollar increase which is an 18.2% increase from the previous fiscal year.

Autism Intervention and Services received a 5.4 million dollar increase which is an 18.6% increase from the previous fiscal year.

Early Intervention (birth-3) received a 20 million dollar increase which is an 11.9% increase from the previous fiscal year.

Community Health Choices received an 860.5 million dollar increase which is a 19.8% increase from the previous fiscal year.

Department of Labor and Industry

Assistive Technology Demonstration and Training received a 400,000 dollar increase which is an 88.9% increase from the previous fiscal year.

Assistive Technology Devices received a 250,000 dollar increase which is a 33.3%

increase from the previous fiscal year.

Centers for Independent Living received a 484,000 dollar increase which is a 22.5% increase from the previous fiscal year.

OVR State Match/Transfer to Vocational Rehabilitation was level funded at fiscal year 2022-2023 at 47,942,000 dollars.

Supported Employment was level funded at fiscal year 2022-2023 at 397,000 dollars.

Department of Treasury

PA ABLE was level funded at fiscal year 2022-2023 at 900,000 dollars.

Department of Health

Services for Children with Special Needs was level funded at fiscal year 2022-2023 at 1,728,000 dollars.

[Watch Full Budget Address Here](#)

[2023-2024 Executive Budget Briefing](#)

[2023-2024 Executive Budget Line Items](#)

Department of Human Services Budget Briefing

The PA Department of Human Services held a webinar discussing Governor Shapiro's 2023-2024 Budget and its investments into DHS.

[Watch Webinar Here](#)

PA Primary Election

Pennsylvania held its primary election on May 16th, 2023. Two PA House of Representatives seats were up for election. Heather Boyd (Democrat) won her seat in Delaware County and Michael Stender (Republican) won his seat in Montour/Northumberland counties. This keeps the House of Representatives with a slim Democratic majority.

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

Employment First Report

The Office of Developmental Programs has released the 2020 – 2022 Employment First report. It documents progress toward the goal of supporting individuals served by ODP on finding & maintaining competitive integrated employment.

[Read Full Report Here](#)

DHS Highlights Advocacy Efforts by and for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Autism

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services released the latest issue of the Positive Approaches Journal, which aims to provide the most recent research and resources for people with mental health and behavioral challenges, intellectual disabilities, autism, and other developmental disabilities to live an everyday life.

[Read full article here](#)

PA School Funding Deemed Unconstitutional

A Commonwealth Court judged that the state's current funding system of public schools violates student's constitutional rights. The judge wrote that the court is in "uncharted territory with this landmark" and left the planning decisions up to Governor Shapiro, lawmakers, and school districts.

[Read full article here.](#)

COVID -19 Information & Resources

[CMS Release: Public Health Emergency \(PHE\) New Overview Fact Sheet](#)

The fact sheet provides clarity on several topics including: COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and treatments; telehealth services; health care access.

[Read Fact Sheet here](#)

Bills of Interest

Below we summarize some bills of interest to the disability community from the 2023-2024 Session. For more information about these bills or any other state legislative activity, go to <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/>.

HB 193. Introduced by Rep. Dan Miller (D – Allegheny). This bill would require that state-owned buildings and certain place of public accommodation that have a maximum capacity of over 2,000 people to install and maintain at least one adult changing station. Referred to House Human Services on March 9th, 2023.

Impact: Would make Pennsylvania more accessible by installing adult public changing stations within the enclosed bathroom.

HB 185. Introduced by Rep. Dan Miller (D – Allegheny). This bill would replace the word "handicapped" with "accessibility" for parking placards. Referred to House Transportation on March 9th, 2023.

Impact: Would remove "handicapped" from Title 75 and define "accessible parking permits" or "accessibility parking placards".

HB 1104. Introduced by Rep. Tarik Khan (D – Philadelphia). This bill would prohibit the charging of admission fees for events for personal care attendants of persons with disabilities and impose penalties if they do charge fees. Referred to House Human Services on May 5th, 2023.

Impact: People with disabilities currently often must pay for the admission of their personal care attendant to join them in a venue, paying double the admission price. This bill would remove this barrier by waiving the admission fee for personal care attendants.

HB 746. Introduced by Rep. Dan Miller (D – Allegheny). This bill would codify the right of people with disabilities to accessible digital content on all state and local government

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

websites. Referred to House State Government on March 28th, 2023.

Impact: By working to implement digital content is understandable and robust, this bill ensures that people with disabilities receive information and services they need.

HB 574. Introduced by Rep. Jess Benham (D – Allegheny) and Rep. Dan Miller (D – Allegheny). This bill would apply the special education funding formula to charter schools. Referred to House Education on March 20th, 2023.

Impact: Charter schools are currently receiving funding based off a median percentage model that assumes 16% of all children enrolled in the district require special education services. This bill proposes applying the principles proposed by the Special Education Funding Commission to school districts for charter and cyber charter schools.

HB 261. Introduced by Rep. Joe Webster (D – Montgomery). This bill would provide for extended special education enrollment due to COVID-19. Referred to House Education on March 10th, 2023.

Impact: By temporarily raising the maximum school age to 21, students who turn 21 through the 2035-2036 school year would be able to allow special education students who were impacted by COVID-19 to stay in school.

SB 506. Introduced by Senator Lisa Baker (R – Luzerne). This bill would strengthen PA's guardianship laws. Referred to Senate Judiciary on March 14th, 2023.

Impact: This bill would work to make sure that situations regarding abuse and exploitation in guardianship are prevented across the state by limiting guardianship to a last resort option.

SB 452. Introduced by Senator Christine Tartaglione (D – Philadelphia). This bill would permanently establish The Office for People with Disabilities. Referred to Senate State Government on March 14th, 2023.

Impact: This bill would establish The Office for People with Disabilities which would be administered by the Office of the Governor.

HB 661. Introduced by Rep. Dan Miller (D – Allegheny). This bill would provide for intellectual disability and autism fee schedule rates. Referred to House Human Services on March 21st, 2023.

Impact: By setting rates for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) based on a national market consumer index, this bill would help provide stability to the system and support DSPs.

National News

ABLE Age Adjustment Act Passed by US Congress

“The US Congress has passed H.R. 1219-ABLE Age Adjustment Act, which lowers the age of disability onset to qualify for an ABLE savings account and increases the account savings limit.”

[Read article here](#)

States Must Start Medicaid Redeterminations of April 1, 2023 Following End-of-Year Package

“The Families First Coronavirus Response Act in March 2020 offered states enhanced federal funding for their Medicaid programs. In exchange, states were required to provide continuous coverage to those enrolled. The provisions were tied to the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). The new law ends the enhanced funding and continuous coverage requirement starting March 31, 2023. States may take up to a full year to initiate all redeterminations with an additional two months to complete the process.”

[Read article here](#)

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CMS Announces Increase in 2023 in Organizations and Beneficiaries Benefiting from Coordinated Care in Accountable Care Relationship

“Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that three innovative accountable care initiatives will grow and provide higher quality care to more than 13.2 million people with Medicare in 2023.”

[**Read article here**](#)

Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee Votes to Approve New Strategic Plan

“The plan provides recommendations to the secretary of health and human services on autism research, services, supports, and more. The strategic plan is the primary responsibility of the IACC, a panel comprised of government officials and members of the autism community, and it is often relied on by both federal agencies and private organizations.”

[**Read full plan here**](#)

CMS Proposes Benefit Expansion for Mobility Devices, Advancing Health Equity for People with Disabilities

“Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a proposed National Coverage Determination (NCD) decision that would, for the first time, expand coverage for power seat elevation equipment on certain power wheelchairs to Medicare individuals.”

[**Read full article here.**](#)

National Disability Rights Groups Applaud SCOTUS Decision in Perez v. Strugis

“As recommended by disability advocates, the

Court’s decision reverses the decision of the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit to protect students with disabilities and will ensure that students are able to use civil rights remedies as provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).”

[**Read full article here**](#)

Subminimum Wage Employment of People with Disabilities Declines Sharply

“Amid an ongoing push to end a decades-old practice allowing workers with disabilities to be paid less than minimum wage, a new federal investigation finds that such employment has dropped by more than half.”

[**Read full article here**](#)

U.S. Department of Education Issue Letter Calling for End to Corporal Punishment

“U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona wrote to Governors, Chief State School Officers, and School District and School Leaders and urged them to end corporal punishment in schools—the practice of paddling, spanking, or otherwise imposing physical punishment on students.”

[**Read full article here**](#)

Judith Heumann Passed Away

No words can begin to describe the influence she has had on tangible, positive changes in the world for people with disabilities. Our hearts go out to her family. Her memory will forever be a blessing.

[**Read article here**](#)

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

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 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.

Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation Releases New Blogs

“Cents and Sensibility address the financial education needs of people with disabilities while providing comprehensive strategies, activities, and resources for anyone who wants to have control over their money.”

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.”

[Read blogs 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

THE ARC OF PENNSYLVANIA

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