



October 15, 2018

Legislative UPDATE

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education

Unless otherwise extended, Wednesday marks the last voting day of the 2017-18 legislative session. Below is what the Office of the Chancellor is watching during these final days of session. Bills that don't pass both chambers before adjournment must start all over again in the new year.

Senate

Session & Committee Activity

[Senate Session Days](#) | [Watch Session Live](#) | [Senate Calendars](#) | [Senate Committee Meeting Schedule](#)

The Senate convenes today, October 15th, in voting session at 1:00 p.m.

FLOOR ACTIVITY

These bills relating to antihazing and alternative pathways to graduation requirements were returned last week to the Senate and require a final concurrence vote before heading to the governor's desk:

SB 1090

Adds a new chapter to the Crimes Code on antihazing, defines the offense of hazing, and provides for aggravated hazing, organizational hazing, and institutional hazing. Institutions and secondary schools shall adopt policies against hazing and appropriate penalties for hazing. Also provides for purchase, consumption, possession or transportation of liquor or malt or brewed beverages and for safe harbor for violations of section 6308 (a) relating to attempts to purchase, consume, possess or knowingly and intentionally transport any liquor or malt or brewed beverages. Title 42 is amended to provide for asset forfeiture for organizational hazing.

[SB 1095](#) Amends the Public School Code to delay the use of the Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement an additional year until the 2021-2022 school year. It also establishes several alternative options to the Keystone Exams for graduation requirements.

The chamber could also consider these bills of interest, as well as trustee [nominations](#) which require Senate confirmation:

[HB 1527](#) Amends Title 23 (Domestic Relations), in child protective services, further providing for persons required to report suspected child abuse.

[HB 2124](#) Requires schools of higher education to communicate certain loan information to students annually. *It is anticipated the bill could yet be amended to require a link to a Federal online aid counseling tool and a repayment estimator be included on student debt letters.*

If considered by the Senate Appropriations Committee, these bills could also be voted on by the full chamber:

[HB 1745](#) Provides for a tuition and fee waiver program for youth who are or have been in substitute care.

[HB 2158](#) Amends the Public School Code, in preliminary provisions, providing for career information and recruitment.

[HB 2159](#) Amends Article XX-C, Transfers of Credits Between Institutions of Higher Education, to expand an online database of articulation agreements.

[SB 714](#) Creates the Pennsylvania Career Readiness Council Act tasked with improving the transition from school to the workforce and addressing industry needs.

[SB 1259](#) Authorizes DGS & East Stroudsburg University, with approval of the Governor, to grant & convey to East Stroudsburg Borough, a certain permanent public sanitary sewer easement & public water supply easement in East Stroudsburg Borough.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

The **Senate Education Committee** meets today to consider suicide prevention legislation.

[HB 1822](#) Establishes a certification process and standards for those schools which elect to become a Certified Suicide Prevention Institution of Higher Education. Through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, institutions would be recognized for their commitment to providing students with information and services to meet their mental health needs and to assist in the event a student experiences a mental health crisis.

House of Representatives

Session & Committee Activity

[House Session Days](#) | [Watch Session Live](#) | [House Calendars](#) | [House Committee Meeting Schedule](#)

The House convenes today beginning at 11 a.m. through Wednesday.

FLOOR ACTIVITY

There are no particular bills of interest scheduled as of yet for a floor vote. However, the Floor Calendar includes

[SR 228](#) Establishes a Global Education Task Force. The chancellor of the State System or his designee would be included as a member.

In floor action last week, the chamber passed:

[SB 1078](#) Amends Title 65 (Public Officers) to allow state and local agencies to discuss security measures during executive session. *Upon receiving signatures in both chambers, this bill will head to the governor for his consideration.*

The House concurred in Senate amendments, sending this teacher certification bill to the governor's desk for consideration:

[HB 1386](#) Modifies the levels of special education and early childhood certificates by grade span and age. If concurred upon by the House, and after receiving signatures in both chambers, the legislation will advance to the governor's desk for his consideration. Special education certificates issued after December 31, 2021, shall be for prekindergarten through grade 12, or up to age 21. Existing special education certificates would remain valid for the term of the certificate. An individual presently holding a special education certificate may expand the scope of his or her certificate to meet the revised grade spans and age levels by a process determined by Pennsylvania's Department of Education (PDE). An individual holding an early childhood education certificate may extend the grade span of his or her certificate to include grades five and six by obtaining a qualifying score on an assessment provided by the department. PDE would be required to include and maintain on its website notice of the availability of the assessment with information describing certification requirements. The department is also required to create a form to notify individuals seeking early childhood certification that they may extend their certification by attaining qualifying scores on the assessment.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

There are no committee meetings of interest scheduled.

Bill Tracking Report

The following information is updated during legislative session weeks.

In the House:

[HB 126](#) Expands the availability of EpiPens by permitting entities such as summer camps, colleges and universities, restaurants, amusement parks, sport facilities, daycares and other facilities to have non-patient specific epinephrine auto-injectors in their facilities. *10-09-18 H Signed in the House*

[HB 1623](#) Amends the Public Employee Relations Act, in representation, further providing for exclusive representation; and making related repeals. The bill would establish that representatives selected by public employees in a unit appropriate for collective bargaining purposes shall be the exclusive representative of "the unit's members" to bargain on wages, hours, terms and conditions of employment. *10-09-18 H Passed over in committee*

[HB 2571](#) Amends the Public Employee Relations Act adding language requiring a public employer to notify a nonmember in writing that there is no statutory obligation by nonmembers to make any payments to an employee organization that serves as the nonmember's exclusive representative. Provides for the content of the notification. Further provides for notification to a new public employee. Also prohibits a public employer from collecting through wage deduction any form of payment from a nonmember to an employee organization. *10-15-18 H Set on the House Calendar*

[HB 2678](#) Amends the Administrative Code repealing provisions relating to employees with access to Federal tax information. It would add a new section requiring a state agency to require any current or prospective employee or contractor whose duties and responsibilities require access to Federal tax information to submit a criminal history background check to be conducted by the Pennsylvania State Police. *10-09-18 H Reported as committed by House Finance*

[HB 2696](#) Extends Educational Assistance Grants to the dependents of National Guard members. A spouse may use this full-time, part-time assistance grant for no more than five academic years and must begin their studies no later than five years after their spouse's release from initial enlistment. Upon transferring this eligibility to their spouse, the member must serve two more years in the National Guard. In the case of reserving educational benefits for children, ten years of service is required, and the member must serve another four years once the grant money has been given to the child, by the age of 26. In most instances, the grant money would be equal to the cost of tuition at the highest-priced State System university, for full-time and part-time studies. *10-11-18 H Reported as committed House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness*

[HB 2716](#) Amends the Public Employee Relations Act, in representation, further providing for appropriateness of public employer unit. *10-12-18 H Introduced and referred to House Labor and Industry*

[SB 1073](#) Amends the Enforcement Officer Disability Benefits Law, known as the Heart & Lung Act, by extending benefits to certain law enforcement officers and investigators. As amended on the Senate floor by the bill sponsor, these benefits would extend to campus police employed by a "participating university." To participate, a State System university, community college, or State-related university may submit a notice to the Department of Labor and Industry; election shall be irrevocable after participation. *10-05-18 H Received in the House and referred to House Labor and Industry*

This update is provided as a courtesy of the Office of the Chancellor as a preview of upcoming legislative activity and a review of action on legislative issues of interest to the State System. The Legislative UPDATE is distributed during legislative session weeks.

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