



January 27, 2020

Legislative UPDATE

Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education

Last week, House Education Committee Chairman Curt Sonney (R-Erie) and Reps. Jesse Topper (R-Bedford/Franklin/Fulton) and Meghan Schroeder (R-Bucks) joined by Chancellor Daniel Greenstein and chair of the State System's Board of Governors Cynthia Shapira, [unveiled a package of bills](#) designed to equip the State System with the reforms necessary to meet its responsibility of providing a high-quality, affordable post-secondary educational pathway.

The bill package is now in the House Education Committee:

- [House Bill 2171](#), authored by Sonney, would reform the governance and accountability of the System's Board of Governors and the Councils of Trustees. These reforms include authorizing the board to create, expand, consolidate, affiliate, transfer, dissolve or close an institution or college, which would better empower the board to align the System with Commonwealth workforce needs and enrollment; vesting the board with the power to enforce board policies and require institutions to share services and participate in collaborations, where appropriate; clarifying that the board may delegate duties to the chancellor; clarifying the powers and duties of the Councils of Trustees and presidents; and more.
- [House Bill 2172](#), authored by Topper, would make needed financial and legal reforms, including affirming the System's sovereign immunity status and status as a government instrumentality; distinguishing between the applicable statutory requirements for state-appropriated and non

state-appropriated funds; prohibiting the System from indemnifying third parties; and more.

- [House Bill 2173](#), authored by Schroeder, would make needed reforms to streamline reporting and clarify and update statutory language. These reforms include clarifying language regarding cooperative use or purchasing agreements; removing outdated terminology; easing redundant reporting requirements; and exempting student records and emails from the Right to Know Law.

These reforms will ensure the State System has the tools and the accountability necessary to fulfill its responsibility. We appreciate Chairman Sonney and Reps. Topper and Schroeder for their leadership on these matters and for their support of System students.

In advance of the Committee's consideration of [House Bills 2171 \(Sonney\), 2172 \(Topper\), and 2173 \(Schroeder\)](#), please call your [state Representatives](#) and urge them to support these bills.

Senate

Session & Committee Activity

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The Senate convenes in session today at 1:00 p.m., and is expected to recess on Wed., Jan. 29th until Feb. 3rd.

The Floor Calendar includes these bills of interest upon which the chamber could act:

- [HB 305](#) (Snyder): Creates the State-owned Assets and Mobile Broadband Services Act and requires the Department of General Services (DGS) to determine if existing state-owned property or assets can be used to provide broadband service in underserved areas.
- [HB 1050](#) (Burns): Provides for residency and enrollment requirements to qualify for in-state tuition related to public institutions of higher learning, State-related or State-owned institutions and community colleges. Prospective students are considered a resident for in-state tuition provided "on the date of deposit confirming their intent to enroll, begins enrollment within the corresponding term for which the deposit was made and remains in continuous enrollment at the institution."

The chamber could act upon these bills, should they be reported from the Senate Rules and Executive Nominations Committee:

- [SB 166](#) (Hughes): Provides for the capital budget for the fiscal year 2019-2020 and for limitation on redevelopment assistance capital projects; and making a related repeal.
- [SB 905](#) (Browne): Provides for the Capital Budget Project Itemization Act of FY 2019-2020. It establishes the categories under which capital projects may be funded, in part or in whole,

through the issuance of general obligation debt or current revenue. This legislation itemizes capital projects in the aggregate amount of \$20,163,731,000. Of this amount, \$1,513,500,000 is itemized for capital projects across System campuses, and \$90,200,000 is itemized for furniture and equipment projects.

We also await the Committee' consideration of the nominees on the [Executive Nominations Calendar](#).

When the chamber convenes the week of Feb. 3rd, the Public Higher Education Funding Commission will meet. Most recently, the Commission heard presentations on the future structure and delivery of higher education, as well as the skills needed for jobs today and in the future. [View video >>](#)

House of Representatives

Session & Committee Activity

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The House stands adjourned until Monday, February 3, 2020 at 1:00 p.m., unless sooner recalled by the Speaker.

In an announcement last week, Speaker Mike Turzai (R-Allegheny) said he [will not seek re-election](#) to the state House. Turzai said he plans to serve out his term, but there is speculation he could leave sooner for a private sector opportunity in which case his departure will create a shuffle within the House Republican leadership team.

Other lawmakers not seeking re-election in November 2020 include:

- Rep. Stephen Barrar (R-Delaware)
- Rep. Thomas Caltagirone (D-Berks)
- Rep. Garth Everett (R-Lycoming)
- Rep. Matt Gabler (R-Clearfield)
- Rep. Neal Goodman (D-Schuylkill)
- Rep. Marcia Hahn (R-Northampton)
- Rep. Mark Keller (R-Perry)
- Rep. Bill Kortz (D-Allegheny)
- Rep. Steve McCarter (D-Montgomery)
- Rep. Thomas Murt (R-Montgomery)
- Rep. Harry Readshaw (D-Allegheny)
- Rep. Justin Simmons (R-Northampton)
- Rep. Mike Tobash (R-Schuylkill)
- Rep. Marcy Toepel (R-Montgomery)

This week in committee activity, the House Democratic Policy Committee will meet Wed., Jan. 29th, in Philadelphia, with Rep. Kenyatta (D-Philadelphia) on establishing the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program and the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Fund. [HB 2205](#) also provides that the Department of Education submit a report within two years of the establishment of the grant program.

Ms. Pam Frontino, Assoc. Director of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs, West Chester University, will share her insight and perspective on eliminating college hunger, based on her role managing West Chester's on-campus Resource Pantry, and the opportunities a Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program could provide to universities and the students they serve.

Bill Tracking Report

The following information is updated during legislative session weeks.

In the House:

[HB 283](#) (Simmons): Amends the Right-to-Know Law to permit an agency to require a requester to certify whether the request is for a commercial purpose. In responding to a request for records that will be used for a commercial purpose, an agency may charge a requester additional standard fees for the search, review and duplication of the records. The fees for records to be used for a commercial purpose must be reasonable, must be approved by the Office of Open Records and may not be established with the intent or effect of excluding persons from access to records or duplicates thereof or of creating profit for the agency. The bill also provides for alternative fee arrangement. *Last Action:* 1-21-20 H Final Passage (Vote Y: 177/N: 15)

[HB 2046](#) (Murt): Amends the Public School Code, in certification of teachers, to permit the Department of Education to continue to issue a special education PK-8 or special education 7-12 certification to any student enrolled in a teacher preparation program at an institution of higher education or approved alternative preparation program prior to December 31, 2021. *Last Action:* 1-13-20 H Reported as amended by House Education

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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