



June 22, 2020

## Legislative UPDATE

### Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education

"Both chambers are scheduled to be in voting session [this] week, with, after Wednesday, that being it for the state House of Representatives for the month of June (according to currently available information) and, apparently, the rest of the summer (with the House scheduled to next return to session on Sept. 15). The state Senate, right now, has Monday through Friday of this week scheduled for voting session, but it's unclear if all those days will be used (as they had originally been planned in case the budget was not yet completed). The same goes for the Senate's two planned session days next week," **Capitolwire** reports.

In other news, the [Capitol reopens](#) today; the House of Representatives will elect a new Speaker; and, the Senate could vote this week to pass legislation that would update and reform the System's enabling statute, Act 188.

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#### Senate

### Session & Committee Activity

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

The Senate convenes at 1 p.m.

This bill establishing a grant program called the Secondary Education Fire Training Pilot Program remains on the Senate Calendar:

- [SB 331](#) (Brooks): Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, further providing for firefighter and emergency service training and establishing the Fire Training Fund. The Secondary Education Fire Training Pilot Program is established to provide high school students with instruction through a partnership between institutions of higher education and school districts or area vocational-technical schools, or both, to increase the number of individuals capable of becoming volunteer firefighters.

Congratulations to Frank Epifano, of Covington Township, and Tameko Patterson, of East Stroudsburg, who were confirmed by the Senate earlier this month as new appointees to East Stroudsburg University's Council of Trustees. Marcus S. Lingenfelter, of Harrisburg, and L. Patrick Ross, of Bartonsville, were reappointed.

The nomination of Shippensburg University student Stephen Washington, of Moon Township, to the System's Board of Governors, awaits action by the Senate Executive Nominations Committee and full Senate.

In committee activity, the [Senate Education Committee](#) is scheduled to meet today at approximately 1:30 p.m. today to consider:

- [SB 1216](#) (Langerholc): Amends Public School Code, in certification of teachers, providing for special provisions applicable to 2020-2021 school year, to remedy certification process difficulties being experienced by teachers, recent graduates, undergraduate students and paraprofessionals.
- [HB 2171](#) (Sonney): Amends the Public School Code, in the State System of Higher Education, requiring the Board of Governors to develop policies and procedures by which the board may create, expand, consolidate, transfer or affiliate an institution or college. Provides that before the creation, expansion, consolidation, transfer, or affiliation of an institution or college the board must direct the Chancellor to conduct a review and analysis of the relevant institutions or colleges using metrics listed in the legislation, including consultation with stakeholders and public hearings. Makes changes to the qualifications and appointment process for the Board of Governors and for the members of the universities' Councils of Trustees. Also makes changes to the sections relating to the powers and duties of councils of trustees and to the powers and duties of institution presidents. **The House [passed this bill](#) on June 9th, by a vote of 200-2. An amendment is anticipated that would modify the original content of the legislation and incorporate most provisions of HBs 2172 and 2173.**

Previously, on June 9th, before the committee, Chancellor Greenstein discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the State System. Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera and Deputy Secretary Noe Ortega as well as representatives state-related institutions and community colleges, also testified. [CLICK HERE](#) for archived video and testimony.

Greenstein thanked the faculty and staff for transitioning to distance learning. **Pennsylvania Legislative Services** reports, "He said PDE collaborated with schools to establish [guidance](#) and noted that the guidance has received national attention. He added that the guidelines allow Pennsylvania's diverse set of universities to establish plans that fit their individual circumstances. [Greenstein] said he expects universities' plans to be largely consistent, with all universities working to facilitate social distancing, wearing masks, increased cleaning, and isolating students exposed to the virus." [CLICK HERE](#) to read more about the System's fall reopening framework.

In other committee activity, the [Senate Communications and Technology Committee](#) is expected to consider broadband service legislation:

- [SB 835](#) (Langerholc): Establishes the Unserved High-Speed Broadband Funding Pilot Program Act, providing for funding of high-speed broadband service infrastructure deployment in unserved areas of Pennsylvania through the establishment of a grant program to extend deployment of facilities already providing broadband service. The bill requires that the grants be issued to entities that have demonstrated the ability to construct and administer high-speed broadband services and ensures that the grants can only be used in unserved areas. The legislation also requires that 25 percent of funding for the projects comes from the entity's own funds.
- [SB 1118](#) (Pittman): Amends Title 68 (Real and Personal Property) providing for broadband services and establishing easement criteria for electric cooperative corporations. This legislation allows cooperatives to utilize existing utility poles for broadband fiber lines as long as it does not negatively impact the value or use of property.
- [HB 2438](#) (Owlett): Amends Title 68 (Real and Personal Property), providing for broadband services, to add a new chapter called "Broadband Services" that provides new definitions and for the ability of electric cooperative corporations or an affiliate to use existing infrastructure facilities to deploy fiber optic lines for broadband through an existing easement owned, held or used by the cooperative corporation. An electric cooperative corporation may only supply retail broadband services through one or more affiliates.

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## House of Representatives

# Session & Committee Activity

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

House session begins at 1:00 p.m.

State House Speaker Mike Turzai resigned his office on June 15th. Majority Leader Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster) will serve as interim House Speaker until the full chamber elects a replacement, which is expected to occur later today. That vote will expected trigger a few other changes within the leadership team of the House Republican Caucus. [Read More >>](#)

In voting matters, a variety of bills are before the full chamber, including police reform bills (HBs [1841](#) and [1910](#)) and legislation providing for provisional hiring:

- [HB 2503](#) (Miller): Amends Title 23 (Domestic Relations), in child protective services, further providing for employees having contact with children and adoptive and foster parents. Amends section 6433 (m) providing an employer, administrator, supervisor or other person responsible for employment decisions may employ an applicant on a professional basis for a single period not to exceed 45 days. Allows a child day-care center, group day-care home or family child-care home to employ an applicant on a provisional basis for a single period not to exceed 45 days only if, upon request, the Department of Human Services grants a waiver. Effective January 1, 2021.

In committee activity, the House Education Committee will advance resolutions honoring Historically Black Colleges and Universities:

- [HR 610](#) (Kinsey): A Resolution honoring the legacy of Cheyney University as the oldest historically black university in the U.S. and supporting its reaccreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
- [HR 870](#) (Williams, D.): A Resolution recognizing the week of September 20 through 26, 2020, as "Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week" in Pennsylvania.

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## Bill Tracking Report

The following information is updated during legislative session weeks.

### In the House:

[HB 2172](#) (Topper): Amends the Public School Code, in the State System of Higher Education, for establishment of the State System and its institutions, for purposes & general powers, for project contracts, for method of disposition & consideration by the General Assembly. *Last Action:* 5-27-20 H Reported as Committed from House Appropriations

[HB 2348](#) (Causer): Amends Title 64 (Public Authorities & Quasi-Public Corporations), in Commonwealth Financing Authority, for Unserved High-Speed Broadband Funding Program; establishing the Unserved High-Speed Broadband Funding Program Account. *Last Action:* 6-10-20 H Final Passage

[HCO3684](#) (Rabb): Allows students to terminate leases without penalties during the COVID-19 pandemic if their school has canceled on-campus instruction. *Last Action:* 06-09-20 H Filed

[HCO3722](#) (Toohil): Requires the Fostering Independence Through Education Tuition Waiver be applied after the federal Chafee grant is used to cover room and board costs. *Last Action:* 06-18-20 H Filed

[SB 905](#) (Browne): An Act providing for the capital budget for fiscal year 2019-2020; itemizing public improvement projects; authorizing the incurring of debt; authorizing the use of current revenue; restricting use of funds; & making appropriations. *Last Action:* 6-10-20 H Signed in the House

**In the Senate:**

[SCO1628](#) (Tartaglione): Provides \$130,000,000 in funding to various higher education institutions from money received by the commonwealth through the federal CARES Act. *Last Action:* 06-16-20 S Filed

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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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