

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Legislative Journal

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2021

SESSION OF 2021 205TH OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

No. 7

SENATE

WEDNESDAY, February 3, 2021

The Senate met at 11 a.m., Eastern Standard Time.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore (Senator Jacob D. Corman III) in the Chair.

PRAYER

The following prayer was offered by Hon. MEGAN MARTIN, Secretary of the Senate:

Let us pray.

In St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he tells us to stand firm in the Lord. Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong. Your every act should be done with love.

Heavenly Father, these are busy days with significant issues facing our great Commonwealth. We know that sometimes it is just easier to give up or to take the easy road when faced with adversity. But these powerful words of Scripture remind us to stand firm in our faith, to be courageous and strong, to act with love. It might be a difficult road we are walking, but when we are rooted in You we can stand firm. Heavenly Father, we ask that You help us to stand firm and strong in all that we do this day and all days. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those assembled.)

GENERAL COMMUNICATION

RECALL OF REGULAR SESSION

The PRESIDENT pro tempore laid before the Senate the following communication, which was read by the Clerk as follows:

SENATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

February 2, 2021

TO: President and All Members of the Senate
FROM: Senator JAKE CORMAN
President Pro Tempore
RE: Recall to Session
Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Pursuant to the recess motion made on January 27, 2021 and due to being unable to convene for session on February 1 and 2 because of inclement weather, the Senate is recalled for voting session on February 3, 2021 at 11 am.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE GOVERNOR

NOMINATIONS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore laid before the Senate the following communications in writing from His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth, which were read as follows and referred to the Committee on Rules and Executive Nominations:

CONTROLLER, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY

February 2, 2021

To the Honorable, the Senate
of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

In conformity with law, I have the honor hereby to nominate for the advice and consent of the Senate, Thomas J. Yablonski, Jr., 1408 Rose Lane, Mechanicsburg 17055, Cumberland County, Thirty-first Senatorial District, for appointment as Controller, in and for the County of Schuylkill, to serve until the first Monday of January 2022, vice Christy Joy, resigned.

TOM WOLF
Governor

**MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY OF THE COMMONWEALTH
SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

February 2, 2021

To the Honorable, the Senate
of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

In conformity with law, I have the honor hereby to nominate for the advice and consent of the Senate, Thomas J. Yablonski, Jr., 1408 Rose Lane, Mechanicsburg 17055, Cumberland County, Thirty-first Senatorial District, for appointment as a member of the Board of Trustees of Temple University of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education, to serve until October 14, 2021, and until the successor is appointed and qualified, vice Ronald Donatucci, Philadelphia, deceased.

TOM WOLF
Governor

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE

February 2, 2021

To the Honorable, the Senate
of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

In conformity with law, I have the honor hereby to nominate for the advice and consent of the Senate, Thomas J. Yablonski, Jr., 1408 Rose

Lane, Mechanicsburg 17055, Cumberland County, Thirty-first Senatorial District, for appointment as Magisterial District Judge, in and for the County of Lehigh, Magisterial District 31-1-06, to serve until the first Monday of January 2022, vice the Honorable Wayne A. Maura, deceased.

TOM WOLF
Governor

BUDGET MESSAGE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore laid before the Senate the following communication in writing from His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth, which was read as follows:

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Office of the Governor
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

January 22, 2021

The Honorable Jake Corman
President Pro Tempore
Senate of Pennsylvania
350 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Bryan Cutler
Speaker
Pennsylvania House of
Representatives
139 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Senator Corman and Speaker Cutler:

In an effort to protect the health and safety of everyone in the Capitol and to allow for proper social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I will not be requesting a Joint Session of the General Assembly to present my annual budget address as in previous years.

However, I would appreciate consideration for each Chamber to allow Members to watch a presentation of this year's budget address on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, at a time that is convenient to the General Assembly during your respective sessions.

Sincerely,

TOM WOLF
Governor

BILLS INTRODUCED AND REFERRED

The PRESIDENT pro tempore laid before the Senate the following Senate Bills numbered, entitled, and referred as follows, which were read by the Clerk:

January 28, 2021

Senators HUGHES, MUTH, FONTANA, STREET, KEARNEY, CAPPELLETTI, TARTAGLIONE, BLAKE, SCHWANK, COSTA, KANE, COMITTA and HAYWOOD presented to the Chair **SB 13**, entitled:

An Act providing for mandatory Statewide employer-paid sick leave for employees and for civil penalties and remedies.

Which was committed to the Committee on BANKING AND INSURANCE, January 28, 2021.

Senators HUGHES, COLLETT, BLAKE, BOSCOLA, BREWSTER, CAPPELLETTI, COMITTA, COSTA, FONTANA, HAYWOOD, KANE, KEARNEY, MUTH, SABATINA, SANTARSIERO, SAVAL, SCHWANK, STREET, TARTAGLIONE, A. WILLIAMS and L. WILLIAMS presented to the Chair **SB 50**, entitled:

An Act providing for health care insurance coverage protections, for duties of the Insurance Department and the Insurance Commissioner, for regulations, for enforcement and for penalties.

Which was committed to the Committee on BANKING AND INSURANCE, January 28, 2021.

Senators HUGHES, KEARNEY, BLAKE, BOSCOLA, BREWSTER, CAPPELLETTI, COLLETT, COMITTA, COSTA, FONTANA, HAYWOOD, KANE, MUTH, SABATINA, SANTARSIERO, SAVAL, SCHWANK, STREET, TARTAGLIONE, A. WILLIAMS and L. WILLIAMS presented to the Chair **SB 51**, entitled:

An Act providing for individual and group health care insurance coverage protections and for core health benefits; imposing penalties; and providing for applicability and for regulations.

Which was committed to the Committee on BANKING AND INSURANCE, January 28, 2021.

Senators HUGHES, FONTANA, BLAKE, BOSCOLA, BREWSTER, CAPPELLETTI, COLLETT, COMITTA, COSTA, HAYWOOD, KANE, KEARNEY, MUTH, SABATINA, SANTARSIERO, SAVAL, SCHWANK, STREET, TARTAGLIONE, A. WILLIAMS and L. WILLIAMS presented to the Chair **SB 52**, entitled:

An Act providing for health care insurance coverage protections, for duties of the Insurance Department and the Insurance Commissioner, for regulations, for enforcement and for penalties.

Which was committed to the Committee on BANKING AND INSURANCE, January 28, 2021.

Senators BOSCOLA, LAUGHLIN, FONTANA, BLAKE, CAPPELLETTI, SCAVELLO and STEFANO presented to the Chair **SB 114**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in miscellaneous provisions, repealing provisions relating to snow and ice dislodged or falling from moving vehicle and providing for snow and ice.

Which was committed to the Committee on TRANSPORTATION, January 28, 2021.

Senators BARTOLOTTA, PHILLIPS-HILL, KEARNEY, STREET, TARTAGLIONE, COLLETT, SCHWANK, COSTA, KANE and CAPPELLETTI presented to the Chair **SB 138**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 61 (Prisons and Parole) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in general administration, further providing for State recording system for application of restraints to pregnant prisoners or detainees; and, in miscellaneous provisions, providing for restrictive housing prohibited for pregnant or postpartum inmates and detainees, for cavity search and inspection restrictions, for training and education requirement, for family consideration in placement and visitation, for feminine hygiene and incontinence products, for postpartum recovery and for human trafficking education.

Which was committed to the Committee on JUDICIARY, January 28, 2021.

Senators MASTRIANO, STEFANO, ARGALL, BAKER, BARTOLOTTA, BROOKS, BROWNE, MARTIN, MENSCH, PHILLIPS-HILL, PITTMAN, J. WARD, K. WARD, REGAN and YUDICHAK presented to the Chair **SB 139**, entitled:

An Act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in terms and courses of study, providing for moment of silence on September 11 anniversary.

Which was committed to the Committee on EDUCATION, January 28, 2021.

Senators BROWNE, MENSCH, YAW, J. WARD, LANGERHOLC, SCAVELLO, BAKER, KEARNEY, COSTA, FONTANA, SANTARSIERO, KANE, GORDNER, TARTAGLIONE, BOSCOLA, AUMENT and HAYWOOD presented to the Chair **SB 140**, entitled:

An Act amending the act of June 3, 1937 (P.L.1333, No.320), known as the Pennsylvania Election Code, in primary and election expenses, further providing for reporting by candidate and political committees and other persons, for late contributions and independent expenditures, for oath of compliance, perjury, disqualification from office and commercial use, for residual funds and for place of filing, providing for manner of filing and for inability to file reports or statements electronically by deadline and further providing for late filing fee and certificate of filing, for additional powers and duties of the Secretary of the Commonwealth and for reports by business entities and publication by Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Which was committed to the Committee on STATE GOVERNMENT, January 28, 2021.

Senators HUGHES, KEARNEY, COLLETT, FONTANA, STREET, SANTARSIERO, MUTH, BLAKE, TARTAGLIONE, SCHWANK, BREWSTER, CAPPELLETTI, COMITTA and HAYWOOD presented to the Chair **SB 141**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 25 (Elections) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in preliminary provisions, further providing for definitions; in registration system, further providing for departmental responsibilities and for SURE system; in voter registration, further providing for methods of voter registration and for application with driver's license application, providing for Commonwealth agencies and other entities and further providing for preparation and distribution of applications and for approval of registration applications; and providing for privacy and security standards for voter registration in this Commonwealth.

Which was committed to the Committee on STATE GOVERNMENT, January 28, 2021.

Senators STREET, KEARNEY, SANTARSIERO, MUTH, CAPPELLETTI, COSTA, KANE and BOSCOLA presented to the Chair **SB 142**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in employees, providing for use of force and deadly force policy for law enforcement agencies.

Which was committed to the Committee on JUDICIARY, January 28, 2021.

January 29, 2021

Senators PITTMAN, YAW, ARGALL, LANGERHOLC, STEFANO, BARTOLOTTA, MARTIN, PHILLIPS-HILL, GORDNER, J. WARD, SCAVELLO, MENSCH, HUTCHINSON, REGAN, BROOKS, K. WARD, DUSH and MASTRIANO presented to the Chair **SB 119**, entitled:

An Act authorizing the Department of Environmental Protection to conduct a public comment process on and submit to the General Assembly a measure or action intended to abate, control or limit carbon dioxide emissions by imposing a revenue-generating tax or fee on carbon dioxide emissions.

Which was committed to the Committee on ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY, January 29, 2021.

Senators BROOKS, SCAVELLO, PITTMAN and STEFANO presented to the Chair **SB 145**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in commercial drivers, further providing for requirement for commercial driver's license; and, in size, weight and load, further providing for restrictions on use of highways and bridges and for conditions of permits and security for damages.

Which was committed to the Committee on TRANSPORTATION, January 29, 2021.

Senators LANGERHOLC, K. WARD, BROOKS, BARTOLOTTA, J. WARD, STEFANO, BLAKE, AUMENT and REGAN presented to the Chair **SB 146**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in assault, providing for the offense of hate crimes against law enforcement officers and first responders.

Which was committed to the Committee on JUDICIARY, January 29, 2021.

Senators LANGERHOLC, J. WARD, STEFANO, MENSCH and BAKER presented to the Chair **SB 147**, entitled:

An Act amending the act of June 2, 1915 (P.L.736, No.338), known as the Workers' Compensation Act, in health and safety, further providing for certification of safety committee.

Which was committed to the Committee on LABOR AND INDUSTRY, January 29, 2021.

Senators LANGERHOLC, ARGALL, VOGEL, MENSCH and STEFANO presented to the Chair **SB 153**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in size, weight and load, further providing for maximum gross weight of vehicles.

Which was committed to the Committee on TRANSPORTATION, January 29, 2021.

February 1, 2021

Senators J. WARD, PHILLIPS-HILL, K. WARD, BLAKE, COLLETT, PITTMAN, REGAN, AUMENT, TOMLINSON and HAYWOOD presented to the Chair **SB 148**, entitled:

An Act amending the act of December 16, 1998 (P.L.980, No.129), known as the Police Officer, Firefighter, Correction Employee and National Guard Member Child Beneficiary Education Act, extending benefits to certain surviving spouses; and further providing for title of act, for short title, for definitions, for Postsecondary Educational Gratuity Program, for report to General Assembly and for retroactivity.

Which was committed to the Committee on EDUCATION, February 1, 2021.

Senators J. WARD, PHILLIPS-HILL, K. WARD, BLAKE, COLLETT, PITTMAN, REGAN, AUMENT and HAYWOOD presented to the Chair **SB 149**, entitled:

An Act establishing a tuition credit program for certain members of volunteer fire companies, volunteer ambulance services and volunteer rescue squads and their dependent children and spouses.

Which was committed to the Committee on EDUCATION, February 1, 2021.

Senators J. WARD, ROBINSON, BAKER, HUTCHINSON and SCHWANK presented to the Chair **SB 150**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in veterans' pensions and benefits, further providing for blind veteran's pension and for amputee and paralyzed veteran's pension.

Which was committed to the Committee on VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, February 1, 2021.

Senators J. WARD, STEFANO and PITTMAN presented to the Chair **SB 151**, entitled:

An Act amending the act of June 27, 2006 (1st Sp.Sess., P.L.1873, No.1), known as the Taxpayer Relief Act, in senior citizens property tax and rent rebate assistance, further providing for definitions.

Which was committed to the Committee on FINANCE, February 1, 2021.

Senators J. WARD and PHILLIPS-HILL presented to the Chair **SB 152**, entitled:

An Act amending the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343, No.176), known as The Fiscal Code, in general budget implementation, further providing for Department of Human Services.

Which was committed to the Committee on HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, February 1, 2021.

Senators LANGERHOLC, K. WARD, BROOKS, SCHWANK, AUMENT and LAUGHLIN presented to the Chair **SB 154**, entitled:

An Act amending the act of July 10, 1987 (P.L.246, No.47), known as the Municipalities Financial Recovery Act, providing for recovery grants for distressed municipalities and establishing the Distressed Municipalities Recovery Fund.

Which was committed to the Committee on COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, February 1, 2021.

February 2, 2021

Senators MASTRIANO, BLAKE, ARGALL, AUMENT, PITTMAN, ROBINSON, SCAVELLO and J. WARD presented to the Chair **SB 155**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 12 (Commerce and Trade) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in Pennsylvania Military Community Enhancement Commission, further providing for establishment and membership.

Which was committed to the Committee on VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, February 2, 2021.

Senators MENSCH, K. WARD, BROOKS, GORDNER, ARGALL, BAKER, BARTOLOTTA, DiSANTO, PITTMAN, STEFANO, J. WARD, BLAKE, BREWSTER, COLLETT, COMITTA, HAYWOOD, MUTH, SANTARSIERO, SCHWANK, TARTAGLIONE, BOSCOLA, HUGHES, SABATINA and COSTA presented to the Chair **SB 156**, entitled:

An Act amending the act of June 26, 2001 (P.L.755, No.77), known as the Tobacco Settlement Act, in medical assistance for workers with disabilities, further providing for definitions and for medical assistance benefits for workers with disabilities and workers with medically improved disabilities.

Which was committed to the Committee on HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, February 2, 2021.

Senators MENSCH, AUMENT, GORDNER, ARGALL, DUSH, BARTOLOTTA, MARTIN, MASTRIANO, STEFANO, J. WARD, BLAKE, CAPPELLETTI, FONTANA, SANTARSIERO, SCHWANK, STREET, TARTAGLIONE, BOSCOLA, KANE and HAYWOOD presented to the Chair **SB 157**, entitled:

An Act providing for the establishment of first-time home buyer savings accounts for first-time home buyers in this Commonwealth.

Which was committed to the Committee on URBAN AFFAIRS AND HOUSING, February 2, 2021.

Senators REGAN, VOGEL, ARGALL, AUMENT, BAKER, BARTOLOTTA, BROOKS, BROWNE, DiSANTO, DUSH, GORDNER, HUTCHINSON, LANGERHOLC, LAUGHLIN, MARTIN, MASTRIANO, MENSCH, PHILLIPS-HILL, PITTMAN, ROBINSON, SANTARSIERO, SCAVELLO, SCHWANK, STEFANO, TOMLINSON, J. WARD, K. WARD, YAW, YUDICHAK, CORMAN and BLAKE presented to the Chair **SB 158**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in employees, providing for medals honoring law enforcement officers.

Which was committed to the Committee on VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, February 2, 2021.

Senators REGAN, VOGEL, ARGALL, AUMENT, BAKER, BARTOLOTTA, BROOKS, BROWNE, DiSANTO, DUSH, GORDNER, HUTCHINSON, LANGERHOLC, LAUGHLIN, MARTIN, MASTRIANO, MENSCH, PHILLIPS-HILL, PITTMAN, ROBINSON, SANTARSIERO, SCAVELLO, SCHWANK, STEFANO, TOMLINSON, J. WARD, K. WARD, YUDICHAK, YAW, CORMAN and BLAKE presented to the Chair **SB 159**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in employees, providing for medals honoring fire personnel.

Which was committed to the Committee on VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, February 2, 2021.

Senators REGAN, VOGEL, ARGALL, AUMENT, BAKER, BARTOLOTTA, BROOKS, BROWNE, DiSANTO, DUSH, GORDNER, HUTCHINSON, LANGERHOLC, LAUGHLIN, MARTIN, MASTRIANO, MENSCH, PHILLIPS-HILL, PITTMAN, ROBINSON, SANTARSIERO, SCAVELLO, SCHWANK, STEFANO, TOMLINSON, J. WARD, K. WARD, YUDICHAK, YAW, CORMAN and BLAKE presented to the Chair **SB 160**, entitled:

An Act amending Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in employees, providing for medals honoring emergency medical services personnel.

Which was committed to the Committee on VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, February 2, 2021.

RESOLUTION INTRODUCED AND REFERRED

The PRESIDENT pro tempore laid before the Senate the following Senate Resolution numbered, entitled, and referred as follows, which was read by the Clerk:

January 29, 2021

Senators PHILLIPS-HILL, BARTOLOTTA, MARTIN, J. WARD, VOGEL, MENSCH, PITTMAN, SCAVELLO, BAKER, GORDNER and STEFANO presented to the Chair **SR 22**, entitled:

A Resolution designating February 3, 2021, as "Four Chaplains Day" in Pennsylvania.

Which was committed to the Committee on RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, January 29, 2021.

HOUSE MESSAGES**HOUSE BILLS FOR CONCURRENCE**

The Clerk of the House of Representatives presented to the Senate the following bills for concurrence, which were referred to the committees indicated:

January 28, 2021

HB 14 -- Committee on Judiciary.

HB 55 -- Committee on Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness.

HB 104 and **108** -- Committee on State Government.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION**EMPLOYMENT FIRST ANNUAL REPORT**

The PRESIDENT pro tempore laid before the Senate the following communication, which was read by the Clerk as follows:

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Department of Labor and Industry
651 Boas Street
Harrisburg, PA 17121

January 31, 2021

To the General Assembly
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: 2021 EMPLOYMENT FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

On behalf of the Wolf Administration, attached please find the 2021 Employment First Annual Report as required by Act 36 of 2018, the Employment First Act. This report highlights the specific policies and strategies that Commonwealth State agencies have adopted to implement the Employment First Act and ensure individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to achieve economic independence through competitive integrated employment.

For more information on Employment First, please visit the Department of Labor & Industry's website:

<https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/employment-first/Pages/default.aspx>.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. This report will be filed in the Library.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair wishes to announce that the President pro tempore has made the following appointments:

Senator Camera Bartolotta as member of the Council of the Arts.

Senator John DiSanto as a member of the Capitol Preservation Committee, and as a member of the State Employees' Retirement Board.

Senator Cris Dush as a member of the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee.

Senator Vincent J. Hughes as a member of the State Employees' Retirement Board.

Senator Scott E. Hutchinson as a member of the Hardwoods Development Council, and as a member of the Pennsylvania Grade Crude Development Advisory Council.

Senator Scott Martin as a member of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, as a member of the Board of Governors for the State System of Higher Education, and as a member of the Pennsylvania Athletic Oversight Committee.

Senator Gene Yaw as a member of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania College of Technology.

BILLS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEES

Senator VOGEL, from the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Affairs, reported the following bills:

SB 36 (Pr. No. 17)

An Act amending the act of December 7, 1982 (P.L.784, No.225), known as the Dog Law, in licenses, tags and kennels, further providing for transfer of dog licenses or tags and other licensing requirements and for service dogs and dogs used by municipal or State Police departments.

SB 64 (Pr. No. 40)

An Act amending the act of June 30, 1981 (P.L.128, No.43), known as the Agricultural Area Security Law, further providing for purchase of agricultural conservation easements, for Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Fund and for Land Trust Reimbursement Program.

Senator STEFANO, from the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness, reported the following bills:

SB 96 (Pr. No. 75)

An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in registration of vehicles, further providing for contributions to Veterans' Trust Fund.

SB 158 (Pr. No. 140) (Amended)

An Act amending Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in employees, providing for medals honoring law enforcement officers, for medals honoring fire personnel and for medals honoring emergency medical services personnel.

LEGISLATIVE LEAVE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Westmoreland, Senator Kim Ward.

Senator K. WARD. Mr. President, I request a legislative leave for Senator Tomlinson.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senator Kim Ward requests a legislative leave for Senator Tomlinson. Without objection, the leave will be granted.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WEEKLY RECESS

Senator K. WARD offered the following resolution, which was read as follows:

In the Senate, February 3, 2021

RESOLVED, (the House of Representatives concurring), Pursuant to Article II, Section 14 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, that when the Senate recess this week, it reconvene the week of Monday, February 22, 2021, unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore; and be it further

RESOLVED, Pursuant to Article II, Section 14 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, that when the Senate recesses the week of February 22, 2021, it reconvene the week of Monday, March 15, 2021, unless sooner recalled by the President Pro Tempore; and be it further

RESOLVED, Pursuant to Article II, Section 14 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, that when the House of Representatives recesses this week, it reconvene the week of Monday, March, 15, 2021, unless sooner recalled by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

On the question, Will the Senate adopt the resolution?

The yeas and nays were required by Senator K. WARD and were as follows, viz:

YEA-49

Table with 4 columns of names: Argall, Aument, Baker, Bartolotta, Blake, Boscola, Brewster, Brooks, Browne, Cappelletti, Collett, Comitta, Corman, Costa, DiSanto, Dush, Fontana, Gordner, Haywood, Hughes, Hutchinson, Kane, Kearney, Langerholc, Laughlin, Martin, Mastriano, Mensch, Muth, Phillips-Hill, Pittman, Regan, Robinson, Sabatina, Santarsiero, Saval, Scavello, Schwank, Stefano, Street, Tartaglione, Tomlinson, Vogel, Ward, Judy, Ward, Kim, Williams, Anthony H., Williams, Lindsey, Yaw, Yudichak

NAY-0

A majority of the Senators having voted "aye," the question was determined in the affirmative.

Ordered, That the Secretary of the Senate present the same to the House of Representatives for concurrence.

CALENDAR

THIRD CONSIDERATION CALENDAR

BILL OVER IN ORDER

SB 8 -- Without objection, the bill was passed over in its order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

BILL ON THIRD CONSIDERATION AND FINAL PASSAGE

SB 81 (Pr. No. 59) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in depositions and witnesses, further providing for expert testimony in certain criminal proceedings.

Considered the third time and agreed to,

On the question, Shall the bill pass finally?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Philadelphia, Senator Saval.

Senator SAVAL. Mr. President, I rise to interrogate the maker of the bill.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senator Saval has requested to interrogate the maker of the bill.

Senator Langerholc, do you agree to interrogation?

Senator LANGERHOLC. Yes, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senator Langerholc agrees to the interrogation.

Senator Saval.

Senator SAVAL. Mr. President, I have two questions about this bill. I wanted to ask whether both sides, considering this bill, can call expert witnesses?

Senator LANGERHOLC. Mr. President, yes, to my knowledge, as it would be per the normal court process, the other side would have the opportunity to cross-examine the experts who are called. It is not a simple one-sided testimony.

Senator SAVAL. Mr. President, thank you. Is that testimony limited to the facts in the case?

Senator LANGERHOLC. Mr. President, obviously it would be limited to the facts of the case. Otherwise, it would not withhold any relevancy objection.

Senator SAVAL. Mr. President, thank you.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Senator Saval concludes his interrogation.

And the question recurring, Shall the bill pass finally?

The yeas and nays were taken agreeably to the provisions of the Constitution and were as follows, viz:

YEA-49

Table with 4 columns of names: Argall, Aument, Baker, Bartolotta, Blake, Boscola, Brewster, Brooks, Browne, Cappelletti, Collett, Comitta, Corman, Costa, DiSanto, Dush, Fontana, Gordner, Haywood, Hughes, Hutchinson, Kane, Kearney, Langerholc, Laughlin, Martin, Mastriano, Mensch, Muth, Phillips-Hill, Pittman, Regan, Robinson, Sabatina, Santarsiero, Saval, Scavello, Schwank, Stefano, Street, Tartaglione, Tomlinson, Vogel, Ward, Judy, Ward, Kim, Williams, Anthony H., Williams, Lindsey, Yaw, Yudichak

NAY-0

A constitutional majority of all the Senators having voted "aye," the question was determined in the affirmative.

Ordered, That the Secretary of the Senate present said bill to the House of Representatives for concurrence.

BILL OVER IN ORDER

SB 84 -- Without objection, the bill was passed over in its order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

BILL AMENDED

SB 85 (Pr. No. 85) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending the act of July 28, 1953 (P.L.723, No.230), known as the Second Class County Code, in district attorney, assistants and detectives, further providing for filling of vacancies.

On the question,
Will the Senate agree to the bill on third consideration?
Senator MARTIN offered the following amendment No. A0190:

Amend Bill, page 1, line 17, by inserting after "shall":
upon a showing that the first assistant district attorney satisfies the requirements of section 1401 of the act of August 9, 1955 (P.L.323, No.130), known as The County Code.

Amend Bill, page 2, line 3, by inserting after "serve":
or does not satisfy the requirements of section 1401 of The County Code

Amend Bill, page 2, line 4, by inserting after "person":
who satisfies the requirements of section 1401 of The County Code

On the question,
Will the Senate agree to the amendment?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lancaster, Senator Martin.

Senator MARTIN. Mr. President, this amendment adds language requiring that the first assistant district attorney in second class counties also meet the eligibility requirements under Section 1401 of The County Code in order to fill a vacancy in the office of district attorney. If you recall, this came up as an issue in a hearing of the Committee on Judiciary when we were looking at the succession processes in various codes, and this will add consistency across the entire spectrum. So, I ask my colleagues for their support.

On the question,
Will the Senate agree to the amendment?

It was agreed to.
Without objection, the bill, as amended, was passed over in its order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

BILL OVER IN ORDER

SB 86 -- Without objection, the bill was passed over in its order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

SECOND CONSIDERATION CALENDAR

BILLS ON SECOND CONSIDERATION

SB 49 (Pr. No. 31) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act designating the bridge, identified as Bridge Key 8659, carrying State Route 3037, also known as William Penn Avenue, over the Norfolk Southern and Lehigh Valley Rail Management rail lines in the City of Johnstown, Cambria County, as the Reverend Andrew William Tilly, Jr., Bridge.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.

SB 55 (Pr. No. 32) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act designating the bridge, identified as Bridge Key 8365, carrying Pennsylvania Route 53 over Little Conemaugh River in Croyle Township, Cambria County, as the Private Fredrick Kinley Memorial Bridge.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.

BILLS OVER IN ORDER

SB 78, SB 106, SB 113 and SB 116 -- Without objection, the bills were passed over in their order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS
GOVERNOR'S BUDGET ADDRESS

Senator K. WARD. Mr. President, as a special order of business, I request that we view the Governor's Budget Address video at this time.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, we will proceed to the viewing of the Governor's Budget Address video.

(Whereupon, a video presentation of Governor Wolf's Budget Address was shown, a printed copy of which was submitted for the record.)

FISCAL YEAR 2021-22
BUDGET ADDRESS OF
GOVERNOR TOM WOLF

The GOVERNOR. My fellow Pennsylvanians: These days are different and so is this budget speech. I am talking to you from the Governor's residence in Harrisburg, and it is perhaps the only time in the last century that a Governor has not made the annual budget address in person, in the Capitol, with much of official Harrisburg arrayed in front. Instead, today I am talking to you, all of my fellow Pennsylvanians, directly. Maybe this is the way it ought to be done. After all, I work for you; I came here to do a job for you, and today I am going to tell you how I think this budget is going to make your lives better.

I arrived here in Harrisburg a little over 6 years ago. I was a newcomer to elective politics, having spent most of my life in business, and I aimed to be a different kind of Governor. I wanted to cut through the stale conventions, the entrenched interests, and the old excuses. I wanted to get things done. One of the

first things I did was try to get to know the Capitol and the people who worked there, so I walked through its halls, met with Senators and Representatives of both parties, just hoping to introduce myself and put faces to names.

One of those faces belonged to a conservative Republican, sent here by rural voters from a remote area of the Commonwealth. I went into the conversation knowing that there would be some obvious differences between us. But I told him I hoped we could work together anyway, and he said he would like that. And then he said something that has stuck with me ever since. He told me that his approach to the job was pretty straightforward: he tried to always stay focused on addressing the real challenges that most of his constituents faced in their daily lives. And to maintain that focus, he told me he liked to put himself in the shoes of a young family just starting out. He tried to imagine the obstacles that might be getting in the way of their hopes and dreams, the burdens that kept them up at night. Things like paying the rent or a mortgage. Keeping up with car payments and insurance bills. And what about the kids? Braces, summer camp, maybe college applications – it is easy to dream about the better life you might be able to provide for your children, but it is mighty expensive to make it possible. A family like that, my new colleague said, what would they truly need? Then he got to his point. What they definitely would not need, he warned me, was a bigger financial burden piled on top of them in the form of higher taxes.

Well, I guess I should not have been surprised that is where the conversation wound up. Still, as I walked out of his office, it struck me that, despite coming from very different places both geographically and politically, we both came to the job of public service trying to answer the same questions. What do people need to be able to build a brighter future here in Pennsylvania? What are the barriers that get in their way? And what can we do to help remove those barriers?

If you were to ask a young family whether they enjoy paying taxes or whether they would like to pay more in taxes, well, they would look at you like you were nuts. But what if we started the conversation the way my colleague had described it? What if we asked people about the barriers standing between them and the bright future they imagined when they decided to build a life here in the Commonwealth?

When I first got to Harrisburg, the answer was almost always the same: it is the schools. Far too many parents across the Commonwealth – in Westmoreland County, in Fulton County, in Tioga County, in Philadelphia County, and beyond – they all felt like the opportunities available to their kids would be determined less by their talent and more by their ZIP (Zoning Improvement Plan) Code. No matter how great a parent you are, if your local school system lacks the resources it needs to provide your kids with a quality education, well, that is a barrier to giving them a better life. It is a barrier so big, it actually blocks out the sun.

Even if you somehow make it over that barrier, well, there is another, higher mountain to be climbed, and that is the skyrocketing cost of higher education. High-quality education is the ticket to greater opportunity for our children. Without it, how can we hope that our kids are going to be able to lead better lives than we did? And by the way, universal high-quality education leads to healthier people and healthier communities. If it is not accessible to everyone, how will our kids be able to build a better Pennsylvania than the one we leave them?

Over the past 5 years, we have delivered an additional \$1.4 billion in funding for pre-K through college education. But that is not enough. For too many families in our Commonwealth, insufficient access to education remains a barrier to opportunity.

It is not the only one. Many parents worry about the quality of the air their kids breathe and the water they drink. They worry about the opioid epidemic ravaging so many communities across

our Commonwealth, stripping hope away from so many people they know. They worry about the possibility that they are one unlucky health emergency away from the complete collapse of their lives.

They worry about the economy too. But they are not worried about the stock market or bond prices. They are worried about the economy around them. Will there continue to be good jobs? Will there still be opportunities to advance and build some financial security? Will their kids have a real chance to wind up better off than they are?

Hey, parents worry. It is what we do. And our daughters are grown now, and they have built successful lives of their own – but Frances and I still worry about them every day. In difficult times like these, too many young parents are haunted by the fear that their children's lives will simply never be better than their own. And you know, there is a real cost to that fear. These families are making the decisions that will shape their lives. And all these burdens reduce any appetite they might have to take a chance on themselves. These barriers to opportunity, they destroy hope. They encourage pessimism. They discourage the kind of broad ambition a robust free-market economy depends on. These fears – these barriers – they diminish all our lives. They destroy the optimism that drives a healthy society.

I, for one, worry about that a lot these days. After all, here I am, speaking to you via video instead of before a packed chamber, due to a pandemic that has cost more than 17,000 Pennsylvanians their lives, thrown our economy into tumult, and disrupted every part of our lives. Yes, we will defeat COVID. But we cannot say yet when it will be safe for life to return to normal – and it is hard to know what "normal" is even going to look like. But I refuse to tell any young family in Pennsylvania that they just happen to be starting out at the wrong time – that with everything going on, 2021, well, it is just not going to be the year we get around to lifting the barriers that stand between them and the future they hope to provide for their children. Indeed, I think it is more important than ever that we act boldly and courageously to remove those barriers once and for all. So today I am proposing a budget designed to do exactly that.

Let us start with taxes. I mean, nobody likes paying them. But I think we can all agree that some things can only be accomplished with everybody chipping in. Repairing roads and bridges. Keeping our communities safe. And of course, giving every child in this Commonwealth the education they need to thrive. So the question is not whether taxes are unpleasant or necessary. They are both. The real question is whether everybody is paying a fair share – and whether we are all getting our money's worth. And the truth is, the answer to both questions right now is "no." Right now Pennsylvania has one of the lowest personal income tax rates in the nation. And yes, for folks like me who have been lucky enough to build some real financial security, that is a pretty sweet deal. But if you are just starting out, now that is a different story.

For one thing, when you go to file your taxes every year, you have to pay the same exact rate as I do. What is more, those taxes you pay are not getting you nearly enough in return. Too many communities across the Commonwealth are still being left behind, especially when it comes to our schools. So local communities, especially rural towns and struggling cities like York and Reading and Scranton wind up raising property taxes. Homeowners and renters alike wind up paying more, and even then, their schools lag behind. Meanwhile, in order to keep that personal tax rate low, we charge Pennsylvania businesses one of the highest tax rates in the country, even as we underfund the schools and job training programs that are supposed to be building our future workforce. Now, what sense does that make?

So today, I am proposing that we do things differently. The first big change: We need to stop asking working families to pay

the same tax rate my family does. I want to help working families get ahead by reducing – reducing – their taxes. This is not about pitting the rich against the poor and the middle class. This is about asking folks who have already made it to shoulder a little more of the burden so that folks who have not made it yet have a better chance to do that. That is the thing about financial security. Most people who have it had to earn it. And if you are one of those people, think back to the early days, when you were first starting out, when you had not yet overcome the barriers that stood between you and your success. Back when you were maxing out your credit card every month, back when you were hoping the old car would make it through one more winter, trying to save up enough for that down payment on a home. If you could go back in time and give your younger self just a little bit more help, would you not do it? Well, that is exactly what I am proposing we do for young families all across the Commonwealth. If you are married with two kids, and you earn less than \$84,000 per year, I suggest we give you a tax cut.

Second big change: My plan cuts taxes for Pennsylvania businesses – by 25 percent. No longer will we ask the businesses that power our economy to pay the highest rate in the nation. And not only does my plan help lift that burden, it levels the playing field by closing the loophole that lets too many corporations benefit from doing business in our Commonwealth without paying their fair share.

Third big change: Even with these tax cuts for working families and businesses, my plan more than doubles our investment in education. Finally, we will be able to fully and fairly fund every school, in every school district, in every part of the Commonwealth. Putting all this funding through the fair funding formula means that struggling schools will finally get the resources they need without taking away from schools already being adequately funded. Imagine: No more chronic underfunding. No more budget gimmicks, shifting around money to hide our shortfalls. No more picking winners and losers. No more last-minute, one-time bailouts for school districts because, well, they cannot make ends meet. And no more passing on the cost of our broken system in the form of skyrocketing property taxes.

On top of that, my budget has new funding for early childhood education, for special education, and for higher education – including funding for our GI Bill and a new community college in Erie. And it creates a tuition assistance program to help more Pennsylvanians attend the PASSHE (Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education) schools – that is our State universities – opening up new opportunities for people to get degrees and other important workforce credentials.

Our commitment to education is not just about funding. It is also about quality. My budget includes reforms that would finally hold charter schools accountable for the results they deliver. It lowers administrative costs in the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program so that we can fund \$36 million more in scholarships. And it gives the teachers to whom we entrust our children's future the security of a \$45,000 minimum annual salary.

We can make 2021 a year when we cut taxes for working families. A year when we level the playing field for businesses. A year when we finally and fully and fairly fund every school in the Commonwealth so that no parent in Pennsylvania, no matter where they live or what they earn, will ever have to worry that their child will be unable to get a world-class public education.

While we are at it, let us do something else for our businesses. The COVID pandemic has put a heavy burden on Pennsylvania businesses and the workers they employ. So for starters, let us move quickly to help struggling businesses weather the storm. We can immediately – immediately – allocate \$145 million to help them make it through the last months of the pandemic. Let us do this now.

But my budget also makes historic investments in our workforce and our infrastructure to help our economy come roaring back once we return to business as usual. And that includes a multibillion-dollar investment in our workforce and economic development systems. That is enough to fund recommendations from our Bipartisan Workforce Command Center's report. And it includes a major investment in our infrastructure – and not just roads and bridges, but infrastructure projects ranging from broadband Internet in rural communities to getting lead and asbestos out of our school buildings.

At every stage, we will be knocking down barriers to advancement for workers and businesses alike. I mean, a road that is not paved – that is a barrier. The job with no prospects for advancement – that is a barrier. A classroom poisoned by lead paint, mold, and asbestos – that is a barrier. And by the way, a paycheck that does not cover basic necessities is a barrier too. And that is why we should immediately raise the minimum wage with a clear path to getting it to \$15 per hour as quickly as possible.

There is a lot more in this budget, including a number of things that I know have bipartisan support: Building on progress and continuing to reform our criminal justice system. Improving the professional licensing process to knock down barriers to entering high-demand professions. Legalizing recreational marijuana. And heeding Senator Corman's call to make government reform a priority by implementing a wide-ranging ethics plan that would make our State government more accountable and more responsible to the people we serve.

There is no reason why we cannot work together, Democrats and Republicans, to pass these initiatives. But if you are skeptical about the prospects for bipartisanship in the wake of what we have seen our politics become recently, well, I cannot say that I blame you. So I want to close by saying this. I think it is incumbent on every public official, no matter what party you belong to or how much responsibility you bear for the events of last month, to look for ways to fix our broken politics. After all, as my conversation with my conservative colleague demonstrated, we all come here with the same goal in mind: helping the people we represent build the lives they want for their families.

But while a lot of the anger and division in our politics comes from overheated rhetoric and selfish partisanship, I think there is something else going on here too. The people who sent us here are frustrated. They keep telling us what they need. They need good schools. They need safe roads. They need more opportunities to advance their careers, start businesses, and build economic security. And then we come to Harrisburg and all we do is nibble around the edges of these problems. A little more funding here. A new pilot program there. We do what the politics of the moment allows. And we promise to try again next year.

But if you are one of those Pennsylvanians starting out, one of those young families surrounded by all these imposing barriers, well, that is just not good enough. You know, you only get to go through life once, and every year we do not act to solve these problems, well, that is a year you can never get back. It is another year where it feels like you are only working all those hours so you can write those checks to your landlord or your health insurance company. It is another year where you pay your taxes right on time, but there never seems to be enough money in the State's budget to fix that pothole on your way to work. It is another year where your kids get taller, your local schools do not get better, and college does not get any more affordable.

No wonder people get frustrated. It is no wonder they get angry. It is no wonder people start to feel like nobody in government cares. It is no wonder they start looking to politicians who promise to shake everything up. So let us stop with the excuses; let us move beyond the chronic timidity. Let us do something.

Let us lift those barriers, and let us stop making excuses for why we cannot.

This budget makes major changes to our tax system. It actually reduces the tax burden on Pennsylvania families earning \$84,000 or less. It also proposes a major tax reduction for Pennsylvania businesses. Still, I know that folks on the other side of the aisle are going to point to this budget and tell you all the things it does wrong or all the things they do not like. But you know what? We are not in the chamber today. There is no one here to clap or boo or sit stoically and not react at all. So I am not talking to them. I am talking to the people of Pennsylvania. I am talking to you. And here is what I am telling you. I am telling you that there is a way out of this cycle of disappointment and half-measures, frustration, and division. I am telling you we can lift these barriers once and for all, and we can do it this year. I am telling you we can have a great public school for every child in every neighborhood in Pennsylvania, good job opportunities for everyone who wants them, and an economy strong enough to provide for everyone. I am telling you it is possible to pursue a legislative agenda for this Commonwealth that is good for families, good for businesses, and good for the economy. And most of all, I am telling you I think your family's future is important enough that we ought to just have this argument right now instead of putting it off until next year, and the year after that, and the year after that.

So go online. Look at my budget. Look at what it would mean for your family, for your community, and for our Commonwealth. And if you agree that your family would be better off in a Pennsylvania with fairer taxes and better schools, raise your voice. At the end of the day, we all work for you. If you have had enough of being told why your government cannot solve your problems, make it crystal clear that, this time, you do not want to hear that anymore; that you will not accept any more excuses. Call your Representatives. Help me get this budget through the legislature, and let us make Pennsylvania an even better place to live, work, and dream big dreams for your kids. And for our future.

Thank you.

RECESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Westmoreland, Senator Kim Ward.

Senator K. WARD. Mr. President, I request a brief recess of the Senate.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, the Senate stands in recess.

AFTER RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Senator Elder A. Vogel, Jr.) in the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of recess having expired, the Senate will come to order.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Columbia, Senator Gordner.

Senator GORDNER. Mr. President, I request a recess of the Senate for the purpose of a meeting of the Committee on Environmental Resources and Energy to be held immediately here on the floor and via Zoom.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. For the purpose of a meeting of the Committee on Environmental Resources and Energy to be held immediately here on the floor and via Zoom, without objection, the Senate stands in recess.

AFTER RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of recess having expired, the Senate will come to order.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS
BILLS ON FIRST CONSIDERATION**

Senator YAW. Mr. President, I move that the Senate do now proceed to consideration of all bills reported from committees for the first time at today's Session.

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

The bills were as follows:

SB 36, SB 64, SB 96 and SB 158.

And said bills having been considered for the first time, Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for second consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SECRETARY

The following announcements were read by the Secretary of the Senate:

SENATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2021

| | | |
|------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 11:00 A.M. | AGING AND YOUTH and HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (joint public hearing on implementation of the State Vaccination Plan) | Senate Chamber (LIVE STREAMED) |
|------------|--|--------------------------------|

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|-----------|---|--------------------------------|
| 3:00 P.M. | VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (to consider House Bill No. 55) | Senate Chamber (LIVE STREAMED) |
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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2021

| | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Off the Floor | RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS (to consider Senate Bill No. 109) | Senate Chamber (LIVE STREAMED) |
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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2021

| | | |
|------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 10:00 A.M. | APPROPRIATIONS and EDUCATION (joint public hearing on PASSHE update) | Senate Chamber (LIVE STREAMED) |
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PETITIONS AND REMONSTRANCES

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lycoming, Senator Yaw.

Senator YAW. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and recognize Bucknell University on its 175th anniversary. One hundred seventy-five years ago, Pennsylvania Governor Francis Shunk,

on February 5, 1846, signed the charter for what was then the first Baptist college in the Commonwealth and was known as the University at Lewisburg, an institution comprising a primary school, an academy, and college. Interestingly, the primary architect of the institution was a person by the name of Stephen Taylor, who was a former professor at Madison University. Madison University is now Colgate University. Taylor eventually left Bucknell and went back to Colgate as the president. This probably explains the intense rivalry between those two universities today. The school's first commencement was held on August 20, 1851, for a graduating class of seven, men only, of course, at that point. Among the board members attending was James Buchanan, who would then become the 15th President of the United States. Thirty-five years later, the University at Lewisburg was renamed Bucknell University in honor of a benefactor by the name of William Bucknell, whose bold leadership and exemplary generosity assured the future of the institution. Actually, his gift prevented the closure of the institution.

Since 1846, Bucknell University has pushed the boundaries of undergraduate education and actively shaped the world outside of Lewisburg. Throughout its history, Bucknell has fostered a diverse, inclusive, and supportive academic community. From the opening of its female institute in 1852, and its first international student graduation in 1864, to the first African American student graduation in 1875, Bucknell has been opening doors to education from the earliest days.

Today, the university boasts over 3,700 undergraduate and graduate students representing most States and 68 foreign countries, and it has more than 360 faculty members. Additionally, the university has 27 Division I sports teams. Bucknell has more than 54,000 living alumni worldwide who form a close network of loyal Bucknellians around the world. Their successful lives and personal achievements are a testament to the vision of the university's founders, who were dedicated to the pursuit of excellence.

Mr. President, if I might, I would like to make some personal notes and observations at this point. I, many years ago, was a student at Bucknell. Frankly, I did not do well academically at Bucknell, but as the first member of my family to attend any kind of postsecondary institution, I learned about life and living. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would be participating in an event honoring the institution. Following in the same line, I never envisioned that I would have a daughter who is a Bucknell graduate, and, to make life even more unbelievable, I have a granddaughter who will be attending Bucknell as a member of the class of 2025. Mr. President, I will admit that I have one outlier in my family - my son graduated from Colgate University. Considering that a professor from that university was instrumental in planning Bucknell makes for some very interesting family discussion and rivalry.

Mr. President, I am, again, honored today to recognize Bucknell University, honor its heritage, and encourage its continued quest for excellence. May its tradition of educating students to lead and serve for a lifetime continue for generations to come. Bucknell University can be very proud of its 175 years, and I am confident that its tradition of excellence will continue to leave a profound mark on Pennsylvania and the world.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thank you, Senator Yaw, and congratulations to Bucknell University.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lehigh, Senator Browne.

Senator BROWNE. Mr. President, I rise, in line with the significant affairs of the day, the most significant event that happens the first week in February every year, to offer some remarks on the Pennsylvania Governor's 2021-22 General Fund and associated funds budget proposal. First, I offer my congratulations to him and his team. There is no doubt that trying to pull together a spending plan of this magnitude, \$70-plus billion of Federal and State dollars, at this point in time is not easy. It requires a lot of work by a lot of people, and those who have committed themselves to public service to pull something like this together every year should be congratulated for that. I also acknowledge that, as part of his proposal, he has presented some initiatives and suggestions that we have agreed and worked with him on in the past to accommodate in terms of additional investment. Things like taking our citizens with intellectual disabilities off our waiting lists so they can get services in the community; transitioning people out of State hospitals so they can have services in our communities; training direct care workers who are constantly committed to taking care of our citizens in our communities, our senior citizens; and investments in early education so that our students can have an opportunity to maximize their experience in primary and secondary education. But the proposal does have significant elements to it that we have, collectively, tremendous concerns about. Those concerns fall both in the short-term and the long-term category as it relates to the fiscal position of this Commonwealth relative to other States, relative to our competitive position internationally, and the long-term competitiveness of our Commonwealth for current and future generations.

The Governor is proposing a \$40 billion spending plan when accommodating Federal stimulus dollars at this point in time, projected for the year, consistent with prior years, and increasing the commitment from Washington for Medicaid payments, \$40 billion, an 8-percent increase. In order to accommodate that level of spending, the chief executive is proposing a significant increase in the personal income tax that is paid by our citizens and the majority of those who run businesses in our Commonwealth and drive our economy. The suggested proposal by the executive is an increase from 3.07 percent to 4.49 percent of net income on the six classes of income in our personal income tax system, which equates to a 46.3-percent increase. That would generate in the half-year cycle, because it would be effective mid-year, \$3 billion of additional revenue capacity for spending, and on an annual basis, a \$7 billion total increase in the amount that Commonwealth citizens will need to pay in order to meet the Governor's spending proposal.

The Governor has said, is claiming, he is moderating this proposal with an expansion of the longstanding special poverty provision that is part of our personal income tax system, and that expansion is, I guess, safe to say, very historic in its scope. It must be looked at in terms of what the overall purpose of this provision is and how it has been applied over time. The increase he is proposing is to \$15,000 for individuals, \$30,000 for a married couple, plus \$10,000 per dependent. That is \$8,500 for the individual and the couple and \$500 for the dependent. The most significant change, though, is the range by which the applicability of this special forgiveness provision, poverty provision, applies. Current law stipulates that the applicability of this provision phases out over a \$2,500 wage range. The Governor is pro-

posing to phase it out at 1 percentage point for each \$500. That is a \$50,000 range that an individual, a couple, or those with children would be able to claim as part of their personal income tax filing.

So a \$15,000 individual filing, 100-percent forgiveness; for up to \$65,000, you get some forgiveness. For a couple, \$30,000 to \$80,000--and we tended to talk about this in the past because this is something we have addressed in the past, and I think we should still consider to look at this as an important part of our personal income tax system--a married couple, or a couple, family of four, with two children, \$50,000 at the floor, 100 percent forgiveness up to \$100,000. Now, obviously, this would have some appeal in terms of its applicability, but we have to consider it in relation to what this system has been set up to do and how it is considered constitutionally in the Commonwealth.

The State Constitution, since the 1800s, has had a uniformity clause in relation to its taxation. Meaning that people have to be treated equally, regardless of standing, by our personal income tax system. The way this has been applied by us and our courts is that it does not allow for differentials and marginal rates based on income. You cannot apply higher rates to people based on the level of income. Now, there is an exception in the Constitution. One of the prime exceptions is that the General Assembly and the executive branch can work to provide for tax provisions that allow for differentials relating to poverty and that we can adjust the total amount, effective amount, paid by individuals and businesses into our General Fund as long as the system accommodates the definition of poverty. If it does not, it goes beyond that, the courts have long interpreted that to be the application of a nonuniform system and, effectively, a progressive tax system that our Constitution has always prohibited.

Now, in order for the Governor's proposal to sustain itself through that longstanding position, someone with two children, a couple with two children who makes \$100,000 would have to be defined as living in poverty. An individual making \$65,000 would have to be considered living in poverty. The Governor stated that this provision would allow for approximately 45 percent of the State's population to see a reduction in their State income taxes. Well, the extension of that, however, is that, according to our State law and our tax law, we are willing to say that 45 percent--who will receive a benefit--of the State's population who pays personal income tax up to \$100,000 for just a family of four are people our Constitution considers living in poverty. Twenty-seven percent, the Governor is saying, are going to be neutral. Well, assuming that a percentage of that is already in the system, then it is 45 percent-plus that we are willing to say, through a change in our tax law, are people in our Commonwealth who are living in poverty.

There is no definition of poverty in this nation that would apply that standard across that many people in any jurisdiction. The implications of that in relation to providing a tax benefit are enormous. It is hard for me, as someone who has worked in this area on the public side and the private side, to see how any judicial setting could determine that is an application of a poverty standard in regards to the Governor's proposal. So we need to keep that in mind in relation to what this means in terms of the proposal and how sustainable it is.

In the end, the only way that this could sustain itself is for the court, along with the Governor, to institute, counter to longstanding constitutional provisions in this Commonwealth, a progres-

sive tax system as part of Pennsylvania's overall tax compendium, which has always been something that, unless we amend the Constitution, does not apply a poverty standard for people who have never been in that category. Understand that we can continue to look at this and increase it so that definition does sustain itself, but unless we amend the Constitution, that is not possible. The short-term implications of this relating to the proposal, I believe, at least from a standpoint of constitutionality and what could be reasonably defended, that the rate adjustment from 3.07 percent to 4.06 percent does, we believe, have tremendous short-term implications.

Obviously, in 2020 we went through, and are still going through, one of the most challenging economic times in our history. We had to do a 5-month budget in May because we could not predict the implications of the challenges of the pandemic on our private-sector economy. The restrictions put in place by Pennsylvania, in relative terms, were more restrictive than most and we were unsure what would happen through the rest of the year. But we were very encouraged to see, in July and August, that the revenue that was being received by our Department of Revenue into our Treasury was well above what we were expecting. There was only one reason for that, and it is because our business community, our small business community, those that drive our economy, were fighting through it. They were keeping people employed, trying to keep their businesses open, performing as they do, as Pennsylvanians do, under very difficult circumstances and working on behalf of their families and communities to keep our economy going. That is the prime reason, prime foundation, of why it was a lot more favorable for us in November to pass a balanced budget. It was because of what they were willing to do, notwithstanding the challenges they faced.

Now that we are seeing a possible light at the end of the tunnel, now that we are distributing vaccines and the possibility that the restrictions that have been imposed and are part of the entire national experience with this pandemic are potentially going to be lifted, the executive is suggesting it is reasonable for those who have sustained that level challenge to be able to contribute 46 percent more in personal income taxes into the Commonwealth Treasury. To realize that much of a challenge and to have to actually face that much of an additional burden when we have not recovered fully from the pandemic is something we have serious concerns with.

The other short-term consideration that I think needs to be pointed out is the uncertainty as it relates to budgeting for this year and what you would include in a General Fund budget proposal given the contingencies that are still available in partnership with our colleagues in Washington. As we know right now, there is a serious discussion in Washington regarding a follow-up stimulus package, and the suggestion by President Biden is that the proposal includes a general relief package. At this point in time, the proposal is \$350 billion, and the share that Pennsylvania's General Fund, the Commonwealth would sustain from that, as an estimate, is \$6 billion. Well, I would expect that we would, given the challenges of our economy and what the drivers of that economy would face with such a significant tax increase, look to accommodate that possible assistance before we would ever consider something like this. The suggestion that you would increase taxes by 46 percent, with the expectation that you are

going to be putting \$6 billion in reserve, I do not think there is any possible way, in the end, that a proposal in Washington would let us do that.

But that is essentially what the Governor is suggesting at this time that we continue to move forward with his revenue proposal, and if something comes from Washington, we stick that \$6 billion in reserve and use it later. If a business owner, family, I believe that we all represent, we are all close to, knew that we had a bridge with our partners in Washington to get through this pandemic to look to a more sustainable time in the future, if we had that available to us and could use it to balance our books but instead put it in reserve and still ask them for a 46-percent increase in overall taxes, I would think it would be pretty clear as to how they would react. It is one of the reasons, from a short-term basis, we have tremendous concerns over the Governor's proposal, and obviously, as I have said, we do have long-term concerns over what this means to Pennsylvania and a sustainable fiscal position for the Commonwealth.

One of the key notes of the Governor's proposal that is necessitating an increase in taxes is his education proposal. A billion dollars, \$1.35 billion total, for additional support just for basic education. It has been defended by the Governor as necessary to implement the basic education funding formula. I think it is important to clarify how this proposal relates to the work of the Basic Education Funding Commission, the unanimous support by that commission, unanimous support by this Assembly for that formula. The way the Governor is proposing this adjustment, the two-part basic education funding proposal, one to essentially true-up the formula, he is calling it implementing the basic education funding formula, \$200 million just to increase the subsidy, is not in line with the recommendation of the commission. They are not in line with the recommendation of the commission.

The commission opined for days on the prior platform that was the base to distribute all of the money for basic education up to that time, the conversation about the so-called hold harmless provision, and what that meant. The fact that because that was applied for many years on a per-student basis, money on a per-student basis, not considering other factors, was not in line, which is obviously a concern, but also opined on the fact that hold harmless was something that had understood benefits because when a district is losing children and tax base and it still needs to maintain its classrooms--loses a couple of students in every classroom, still has to maintain them--taking money out of their base in one year is something that is very hard to sustain because they are trying to accommodate the fixed costs of running the education system. So we were not going to challenge that.

The commission decided they were not going to challenge that basis because there were concerns about it, but it did have some merit that we would look to this platform for the future. We would not accommodate a hold harmless, same number of students every year, but change that calculation every year. For all money going forward we would use this new formula to promote fairness. The base of the Governor's proposal is to say to implement the formula, you have to address all those issues in the past. There were pluses and minuses to those issues in the past, but we decided that was not something for this commission to do, and the Governor and the General Assembly approved that position unanimously.

If the Governor suggests a way forward, if it is for a dollar, if it is for a \$100 million, or \$1 billion to stay in line with the Basic Education Funding Commission's recommendation, he needs to present an appropriation proposal that runs money through the formula. If you run money through the formula and you look at that in relation to what his proposal does, it presents a much fairer picture in regard to the distribution of dollars across the State. His proposal shows enormous increases for some districts. Some districts need significant additional dollars given their challenges, a lot of spikes in a lot of districts do not get any real market increase if you use the formula for whatever this General Assembly decides to appropriate with the Governor, and that is a core part of the recommendation of the funding commission. It is up to the General Assembly and the Governor to decide on the amount of money we decide to go forward with on a bipartisan basis. If you use that formula, it presents a lot fairer distribution of dollars across the Commonwealth, which is the purpose of the formula in the first place.

The Governor's proposal will continue to exacerbate the disparities between districts not in line with the foundations of the formula we presented - the needs of students, the relative tax effort of the districts, and the relative tax capacity they have to raise money. But if we are going to do anything and talk about, which we always do, additional money for districts, we should use the formula that we all approved and run any additional money into that formula.

The other part of this that goes in line with the other concern he has is doing it in a sustainable way. The prime reason why the Governor is requesting a 46-percent increase in taxes is to sustain, at one point in time, a \$1.1 billion total infusion of dollars, not considering the subsidy increases or the increase suggestions in special education or other components in the education budget. In order for this to be real, it has to be sustainable. This harkens back to the challenge we had with sustainability in 2010 and the decision we made in sustainability relating to our pensions. Actuary requirements would have required us, given the challenge our pension system had coming out of the market downturn in 2008-09, to increase our contributions to that system all in one year by \$4 billion. Do it all in one year. The reason why we did not do that, and why we countered those recommendations and to try to do it incrementally, is because we did not want to cause enormous stress on our budget, which would make making those contributions in the future a lot harder, so we did it incrementally.

This year--this is a keynote year for us--we have met our obligations to the system. The total increase to the pension system is 1.2 percent, and that is a result of us presenting a financial package in a very important area that is sustainable. In order to make this sustainable, again, the Governor is suggesting an increase in the personal income tax, and sustainability ties into the concern that we all have that we are challenged with, that the Independent Fiscal Office puts an extraordinary amount of effort in quantifying for us, and that is the conversation about structural imbalance. Without structural balance, having anything sustainable in a public finance platform is really hard. The suggestion that we made regarding structural balance is something--imbalance--in how it is defined and how to address that concern is where we differ. Structural imbalance is essentially two things: that your revenue capacity is not growing fast enough on a percentage basis to accommodate your mandatory expenditures, and over

time, your mandatory expenditures you need to make will always outstrip your revenue capacity on a percentage basis over time. Well, you do not have to assume the only solution for that is to increase your revenue capacity, to increase the rates on which you are charging people in order to meet your public obligations. The conversation needs to continue to be more comprehensive.

We still have significant structural spending issues in some of our larger departments. Our Department of Corrections, where the spending continues to increase every year, where the number of inmates in our prisons continues to drop, recidivism rates because of our bipartisan effort on justice reform continues to go down, but the spending that is consuming our revenue capacity continues to decline. We still need to be as aggressive as possible in caring for our most vulnerable citizens, our citizens in need of services of healthcare, child care, human services in a sustainable way. Those challenges still exist, and we need to be as aggressive as possible to meet structural imbalance and turn it into structural balance by addressing those issues as well. We also should not discount what we have been doing over the last 10 years to do that. Solving structural imbalance does not forego the ability to use current cash assets as a means to accommodate the deficits that occur in any one year. Using cash management strategies, all of which we have used over the last 10 years during the most difficult times we have had, in maintaining a competitive position along with the Governor, those are things that are also part of this.

If it comes down to a conversation on revenue, again, solving structural imbalance is insuring that recurring revenue continues to increase over time more than your recurring expenditures. You have to maintain a revenue platform over time that grows faster than what you have now, and this is an area that we have had, and continue to have, significant differences in the Governor's philosophy on this. Our personal income tax is one of the most competitive in the nation. Frankly, it is one of the few competitive platforms we have, and that is a good thing, because it is what our small businesses and families pay. The Governor is suggesting, in order to meet the structural imbalance, you have to raise the personal income tax to fill the hole. In my opinion, making a competitive tax position less competitive against your competitors, against other countries that our companies have choices to invest in, is not the appropriate way to insure that revenue base grows faster.

It will work in the opposite. The only thing it will do is make sure our prime levy, the one that raises the most money for us, the one that is the most competitive, raises less money over time. So the Governor's suggestion, for a short period of time, may fill a hole, but it will put a tremendous burden on the drivers of our economy, and then, over time, that structural balance will repeat itself and we will be back in the same position we have been in before. The only way to achieve a structural balance is to maintain, as best we can, the competitive position of this Commonwealth, look to invest in our productive capacity, in our tremendous assets that we have for productive capacity, and insure our most competitive components, our tax compendium, stay there so they will grow faster over time.

The Governor, in his address, had commented about the challenges of partisanship as something that we should, as the citizens of this Commonwealth, be concerned about in relation to one of the most important things we do, and that is the raising and spending of Commonwealth dollars on behalf of our citizens.

One thing I have been proud of, even during our most challenging times, is that we have worked together, working with my colleague, Senator Hughes, and with the Governor over this past year, in a time that I thought would end up a lot more challenging than it was, and it will continue to be that way on a bipartisan basis to address our fiscal obligations that are challenges. It is something we should celebrate, not something we should point to as a point of possible concern. We will, as we have in line with that thought, work with the Governor through this cycle to try to find common ground, as we always have, in one of our most important obligations, and that is the raising and spending of Commonwealth dollars, and, in doing so, at the end of the day, insure a sustainable, productive platform for the Commonwealth citizens and for our future.

Mr. President, I thank you for the time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Philadelphia, Senator Tartaglione.

Senator TARTAGLIONE. Mr. President, today marks 5,324 days since the Pennsylvania legislature last raised the minimum wage. That is more than 14 years, and it is far too long.

Mr. President, today I would like to talk, for a few minutes, about the free market. We hear this term used quite often in many different contexts. We tend to hear it mostly from conservative economists and the business community as they seek to stymie regulatory policies that protect the public interest and promote their own hands-off agendas. The free market, they tell us, is a pillar of capitalism in the American system, but maybe it is not all that they make it out to be. Take, for example, recent events on Wall Street. A few influential Reddit users, with a keen understanding of hedge funds, convinced a whole lot of amateur traders to use a mobile app called Robinhood to purchase a boatload of GameStop shares, causing the price to skyrocket from under \$20 a share on January 11, to \$347 a share barely 2 weeks later. The bubble grew, and it grew fast. It raised the market value of the stock far beyond what experts say is the true value of the company. As a result, the developers behind the app stopped all trading on the stock, ostensibly to protect naive, perhaps, savvy small-time investors from losing their shirts when the bubble burst. Perhaps *New York Magazine* said it best when it published this headline: "Robinhood banning GameStop proves the free market is alive." Mr. President, the Robinhood/GameStop episode shows how the so-called free market can be very frail when a critical mass of individual hackers with common interests, and who even may be coordinating their efforts, decide to exert specific influence over it.

I say this because we often hear proponents of the free market use the term when speaking of the labor market and the minimum wage. They say human labor is a commodity just like any other, and the free market will insure that workers earn wages appropriate to their economic value. This rhetoric could not be further from the truth. We know that it is false because wage growth has lagged far behind economic growth and the growth of worker productivity for decades. When the economy is bad and in times of uncertainty, employers say they cannot afford to pay more, and when the time is good, employers still find reasons to avoid sharing profits.

Mr. President, Pennsylvania workers in our economy need the protection of a fair and equitable minimum wage. We need to insure the rights of all workers to earn wages at a level that will enable them to pay for necessities like food, housing, child care,

and healthcare. My forthcoming legislation, Senate Bill No. 12, would provide that assurance to working Pennsylvanians and their families. Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Delaware, Senator Kearney.

Senator KEARNEY. Mr. President, today the Governor delivered his Budget Address unveiling his proposals for getting the Commonwealth up and running and on the road to a full recovery. You know, it is said time and time again that a budget is a moral document. It is a reflection of our values and our priorities. How we fund schools and support working families are all decisions with profound moral implications. So today seems like a fitting day to examine our morals.

We must keep doing the people's business and develop a budget that invests in hardworking Pennsylvanians. But we cannot move forward while forgetting that a violent insurrection took place in our nation's Capitol just a month ago. We cannot forget that a Member of this body fueled that insurrection with debunked claims and widespread fraud. We cannot forget that a Member of this body called for, quote, "a death match with the Democratic Party," unquote. We cannot forget that a Member of this body organized bus rides to Washington, D.C., to attack Congress' constitutional duties and stop the peaceful transfer of power. We remain in a position where one of our colleagues violated his moral obligations. We cannot forget any of this, because to let it happen without consequence gives a wink and a nod to future threats against our democracy. That we cannot tolerate.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Philadelphia, Senator Hughes.

Senator HUGHES. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity. You know, the responsibility of the leader of any organization is several-fold, but one of them is to set the tone, the priorities, the direction, and the goals of which that organization is supposed to achieve--what he or she wants that organization to achieve. They, as the leader, step back and see the big picture. They see the broad landscape. They see where that organization exists in the context of other organizations in whatever space they may be in. That is the responsibility of the leader. The leader is responsible for setting up and creating the environment to achieve those goals. Whether it be in business, a Little League team, or in government, that is the responsibility of the leader, to be our best selves, to achieve our best goals, to see above and beyond the immediate, to try to work in an aggressive fashion, in a unified fashion, to get us to the best picture, the best place.

Today, Governor Wolf did, in fact, just that. He put out some extremely important goals, some extremely aggressive goals. Definitely all of them laudable, all of them that we need to achieve. I thank him for that. I thank him for seeing that, yes, we have a budget problem that has to be addressed, that for far too long has not gotten addressed, a structural budget problem. But I thank Governor Wolf for not just recognizing that one problem, that structural budget problem and trying to address it, I thank Governor Wolf for also addressing the fairness problem that exists in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I want to thank Governor Wolf for addressing the priorities problem that has existed in Pennsylvania for far too long and that, with today's

budget proposal--and he wants to address it in a very aggressive, but very thoughtful way--to try to finally reach some fairness in trying to attack and get our hands around the priorities that this State needs to be addressing.

Let us look at it in broad strokes. Education funding: Governor Wolf has gone in deep and gone in aggressively to finally deal with one of the most important issues that this State has not addressed for far too long, fairness in funding our education system. What Governor Wolf said today is we are going to tackle that issue head-on, and we are going to drive our funding to fairly invest in the education of the children of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. That is what he did today. Understanding that, even though there was an achievement about 5 or 6 years ago around adopting the fair funding formula, but the problem is that those dollars going into the fair funding formula would only be incremental and it would take a quarter of a century to get to fair funding going at the rate that we historically have been going at. So what the Governor did today is said no, we are not going to lose another generation or so, we are not going to lose 25 years in this fight, we are going to go after this fight right now and get it done right now. Thank you, Governor Wolf, for laying out that goal and laying out a concept and proposal to get us there, to make it happen, to make sure that the students who have been in the communities, in the districts, and the students and the teachers in those communities who have been left out and forgotten, who have been historically disadvantaged in one of the worst equity funding education systems in the nation, one of the worst, will finally get the light of equity available to them and the funding to support that. Thank you, Governor Wolf. It is a historic effort, but we thank you for pushing it out there and laying it at our feet to get done, and getting it done in a way that no student is hurt, no student is disadvantaged while we try to get equity in Pennsylvania for the education of our children and for those who service them and teach them. Thank you, Governor Wolf. That is the kind of goal that we all need to roll up our sleeves and get done.

In addition to that, one of the goals that Governor Wolf has set out for us to achieve is a major investment in dealing with broken and toxic schools that exist in Pennsylvania. It is unconscionable that we allow our children to go to schools that are infested with lead and asbestos, that are broken and crumbling, and expect them and the teachers and professionals who work with them to get and provide a 21st century education. It is unconscionable that we allowed that to happen. So, thank you, Governor Wolf, for challenging us to be our best selves and to create an academic environment for our children and for our communities, because schools are not divorced from the communities that they are in. Thank you, Governor Wolf, for setting up the challenge for us, as the General Assembly, to achieve, to meet the challenge of clean and environmentally safe schools so that our children and those who teach them and those who work in their schools and the parents who come to visit those schools and engage with those schools, the communities that those schools exist in, so that they can be 21st century models for academic success and in the future for our communities. Thank you, Governor Wolf. Let us meet that challenge.

What Governor Wolf has laid out in front of us in his Budget Address today in terms of those who are going to college, free and affordable college for what, 90,000 students. College-going students in Pennsylvania, at our own proud State system univer-

sities, all 14 of them, the opportunity for free and affordable college. That, Governor Wolf, is a response to the reality that we need more of our students and more of the population of Pennsylvania with some type of certificate, some type of credential so they can meet the challenge of a 21st century economy and also meet the challenge of dealing with the issues that need to be addressed across this State and this nation. Our own Chancellor, Chancellor Greenstein, said in a presentation to the Higher Education Funding Commission, that the growth in the number of jobs that are going to exist in Pennsylvania and across the nation is far exceeding the number of young people or older adults who are getting those certificates and degrees. We need more people to get more advanced learning to meet the jobs that are going to be created and the work that needs to be done. The way to do that is to make college more accessible. The way to make college more accessible is to provide for free and affordable college, like a number of States are doing across the nation. Thank you, Governor Wolf, for picking up the challenge and laying it at our feet to deal with the issue of free and affordable college.

The cost of going to college and getting advanced degrees or certificates of advanced learning is far too high, propelled by folks who want to rip off Pennsylvania citizens--that is another conversation, far too hot--and we must be in the business of creating an equal playing field so that our children, our citizens in Pennsylvania who want to get more education, have the opportunity to do so. Thank you, Governor Wolf, for laying out that challenge. Free and affordable college.

Thank you, Governor Wolf, for laying out the challenge of reducing taxes on middle-income, moderate-income, and low-income Pennsylvania citizens. Thank you, Governor Wolf, for proposing to reduce the tax burden for middle-income, moderate-income, and low-income Pennsylvania citizens. I want to say that again. Thank you, Governor Wolf, for laying out a proposal today to meet the challenge and reduce the tax burdens for middle-income, moderate-income, and low-income Pennsylvania residents. There has been no fairness in how we tax people in Pennsylvania. None at all. Your challenge to us to adopt a proposal that reduces the tax burden on middle-income folks, for moderate-income folks, for low-income individuals needs to be picked up, and we need to make that happen.

Of course, as Senator Tartaglione had said earlier, and as we have fought this fight constantly, the need to raise Pennsylvania's minimum wage is just--it remains appalling that we are behind every State in our region. New York's, New Jersey's, Delaware's, Maryland's, West Virginia's, and Ohio's minimum wages are higher. We are lower than them. We have not increased Pennsylvania's minimum wage. The last time we took action at the State level was 2006. The Federal government took action in 2009. So it has been since 2006 that there has been some major move by State action, and, of course, in 2009--thank you, President Obama and then-Vice President Joe Biden, for taking action then. We need to raise the minimum wage.

Laudable, important challenges for Pennsylvania to be its best self: the fair and equitable funding of our educational system; cleaning up poisonous school buildings, toxic school buildings, school buildings that are falling into disrepair; providing for free and affordable college; reducing the tax burden, reducing taxes on middle-income, moderate-income, and low-income Pennsylvania residents and small businesses as well; raising Pennsylva-

nia's minimum wage. These are important policy conversations, but more important, priorities that we need to get done here in Pennsylvania. I thank Governor Wolf for laying them out, for putting them forward, for not being timid about how we need to move forward but being aggressive in this policy initiative that he has put in front of us. Major historic education funding and fairness as well. It is an economic obligation we need to take on, but it is a moral obligation as well. Free and affordable college. Morally, we need to get it done. Economically, we need to get it done. Cleaning and repairing toxic and broken schools, we need to get that done. Reducing taxes on middle-income, moderate-income, and low-income individuals, we need to get that done. Raising Pennsylvania's minimum wage, all of these things need to be achieved. It will not be an easy struggle, it will not be easy work. But we can get it done, and I thank Governor Wolf for laying out these priorities, for being the leader that he has shown to be, and I am prepared to work, and our Caucus is prepared to work, to roll up our sleeves to get this job done.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SECRETARY

The SECRETARY. Consent has been given for the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness to meet tomorrow, Thursday, February 4, 2021, at 3 p.m., to consider House Bill No. 55. This meeting will be livestreamed from the Senate Chamber.

PETITIONS AND REMONSTRANCES (Continued)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Allegheny, Senator Costa.

Senator COSTA. Mr. President, I submit remarks on behalf of Senator Muth and ask that they be included in Petitions and Remonstrances.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the remarks will be spread upon the record.

(The following prepared remarks were made part of the record at the request of the gentleman from Allegheny, Senator COSTA, on behalf of the gentlewoman from Montgomery, Senator MUTH:)

Mr. President, I rise today, once again concerned with the lack of action by this legislative body to operate under rules that limit transparency and restrict accountability. We are just under a month, 29 days into the 2021-22 legislative Session, and already we have experienced the impact of biased rules that prevent certain Members of the Pennsylvania Senate the full ability to provide input we receive from our constituents when considering legislation and policy matters.

Earlier today, in the meeting of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness, a comment was made regarding the lateness of amendments provided with concern that the Majority had not had the opportunity to review the impacts of these changes. I wholeheartedly agree that with more time, all Members of this committee should have time to review any legislation or amendments, receive stakeholder positions, and develop comprehensive and complete responses to important policy matters being considered. Of course, this was directly due to the fact that our current operating rules allow for the Majority party to move forward legislation, in committee or on the floor, without ample or adequate notice. The meeting of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness, for instance, while

sunshined last Friday, had items added to the agenda midday yesterday and amendments sent later that afternoon.

As legislators, we should all have the opportunity to offer amendments and do our best to work for our constituents, not just the Majority party. The hypocrisy has gone on too long and we need equitable rules here in this Chamber.

Last week, a package of bills were introduced by myself, Senator Lindsey Williams, as well as others, that advocate for fair rules regardless of political party affiliation. This includes reforms around more transparent and fair announcements of committee meetings, allowing time for everyone to draft amendments rather than forcing Minority party Members to rush last minute, thereby asking the Legislative Reference Bureau to rush last minute, to do our jobs. In addition, we introduced reforms that would allow for both chairpeople of a committee to contribute to the agenda, to ensure that bills for all constituencies can be considered in committee.

It is time for partisan politics to end and for this body to work towards the will of Pennsylvanians. I urge my colleagues from all parties to do better, be transparent, and tell the truth to all Pennsylvanians.

Thank you Mr. President.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lancaster, Senator Aument.

Senator AUMENT. Mr. President, I move that the Senate do now recess to the call of the President pro tempore.

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

AFTER RECESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore (Senator Jacob D. Corman III) in the Chair.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The time of recess having expired, the Senate will come to order.

RECESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Columbia, Senator Gordner.

Senator GORDNER. Mr. President, I move that the Senate do now recess until Friday, February 5, 2021, at 11:55 a.m., Eastern Standard Time, unless sooner recalled by the President pro tempore.

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

The Senate recessed at 10:59 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.