

Pennsylvania Perspective for Thursday, February 13, 2025

Pennsylvania

Gov. Shapiro Sues Trump Admin. Over \$2B Federal Funding Freeze

Governor Josh Shapiro has filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration for allegedly withholding over \$2 billion in federal funds from Pennsylvania, despite court orders to restore the funding. The lawsuit follows Republican Attorney General Dave Sunday's decision not to join other states in similar legal actions. The Philadelphia Inquirer has [more](#).

Gov. Shapiro's Budget Proposal Boosts Health, Agriculture, Child Care

Gov. Shapiro's \$51.4 billion budget proposal allocates funds to support rural hospitals, recruit health care providers, and boost agricultural grants and outdoor recreation. It also includes significant investments in child care and direct care workers, along with universal postpartum depression screenings to enhance maternal health care.

IFO Projects PA Budget Deficit to Reach \$6B by 2025-26

The Independent Fiscal Office's (IFO) new projections indicate Pennsylvania's budget deficit could grow to \$6 billion by the 2025-26 fiscal year, with potential depletion of the state's Rainy Day Fund. Gov. Shapiro's proposed revenue-generating measures, including legalizing recreational cannabis and taxing skill-based gaming machines, could help reduce the deficit. City & State Pennsylvania has [more](#).

PA Bill Aims to Attract Health Care Workers to Rural Areas

The Pennsylvania House Healthcare Committee advanced a bill offering student loan repayment grants to medical workers in rural areas to address staffing shortages. The bill targets nurses, physicians, midwives, dentists, and dental hygienists, requiring a minimum three-year commitment. Center Square Pennsylvania has [more](#).

Bill to End Life Sentences Without Parole for Felony Murder Reintroduced

House Judiciary Committee Chair Tim Briggs (D-Montgomery) re-introduced a bill to allow parole after 25 years for those convicted of felony murder, arguing current laws are unjust and disproportionately affect Black and Latino individuals. The bill has bipartisan support. Center Square Pennsylvania has [more](#).

PA Senate to Consider HIV Decriminalization Bill

State Senator Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia) introduced a bill to end criminal penalties for people with HIV in Pennsylvania for behaviors that would not be criminalized if they did not have the virus, arguing that current laws stigmatize rather than reflect scientific understanding of HIV transmission. WTAJ has [more](#).

Rising Energy Costs Spur Debate Over Consumer Protections, Unpaid Bills



David F. Bonsick

Principal,
Cozen O'Connor
Public
Strategies

dbonsick@cozen.com
Phone: (717) 773-4214
Fax: (717) 703-5901



Beth A. Brennan

Senior
Principal,
Cozen O'Connor
Public
Strategies

bbrennan@cozen.com
Phone: (717) 773-4213
Fax: (717) 703-5901



Jim Davis

Executive Vice
President,
Cozen O'Connor
Public
Strategies

jdavis@cozen.com
Phone: (717) 703-5891
Fax: (717) 703-5901



Samuel Denisco

Senior
Principal,
Cozen O'Connor
Public
Strategies

sdenisco@cozen.com

Phone: (717) 773-4630
Fax: (717) 703-5901



Joseph Hill

**Managing
Director, Cozen
O'Connor
Public
Strategies**

jhill@cozen.com
Phone: (215) 665-2065
Fax: (215) 665-2013



Kevin J. Kerr

**Principal,
Cozen O'Connor
Public
Strategies**

kkerr@cozen.com
Phone: (412) 620-6496
Fax: (412) 275-2390



Brianna A. Westbrook

**Government
Relations
Associate,
Cozen O'Connor
Public
Strategies**

bwestbrooks@cozen.com
Phone: (215) 665-4757
Fax: (215) 665-2013

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As energy costs rise, Pennsylvania lawmakers, utilities, and consumer advocates are debating the reauthorization of Chapter 14, which governs utility shutoffs and reconnections. The discussions focus on balancing protections for vulnerable customers with the need to manage unpaid bills and prevent rate increases for paying customers. The Morning Call has [more](#).

PA Dems, Contest Every Race Launch Statewide Candidate Recruitment Drive

The Pennsylvania Democratic Party and Contest Every Race are launching a statewide candidate recruitment drive to ensure that every local office has a Democratic candidate, especially in rural areas where races often go uncontested. PoliticsPA has [more](#).

PA Combating Bird Flu with Expanded Testing, Containment Efforts

Pennsylvania has allocated \$13.5 million to help farmers with bird flu testing, biosecurity measures, and recovery from losses, as the state sees a rise in avian influenza cases affecting over 2.2 million birds in 2025. Spotlight PA has [more](#).

Philadelphia

Mayor Parker to Focus on Housing, Tax Reform in Year 2

Mayor Chelle Parker emphasized her commitment to creating, repairing, and restoring 30,000 housing units and launching an aggressive tax reform plan in her address to business leaders. The Philadelphia Inquirer has [more](#).

Pittsburgh

Embrescia Appointed to Allegheny County Council

Mike Embrescia has been appointed to the Allegheny County Council, replacing Sam DeMarco who resigned last month. Embrescia, a business-minded moderate, aims to serve the constituents of Allegheny County and plans to run for a full term in the upcoming municipal election. WESA has [more](#).

O'Connor Leads Gainey in Fundraising Ahead of Pittsburgh Mayoral Primary

Allegheny County Controller Corey O'Connor has significantly outpaced incumbent Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey in fundraising, raising nearly \$465,000 in January compared to Gainey's \$24,000. This fundraising gap may indicate challenges for Gainey's re-election campaign. The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review has [more](#).

Market Square Revitalization Set to Begin in April

The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership received final approval to start a \$14-\$16 million project in April to revitalize Market Square with more greenery, seating, and limited vehicle traffic. The project is part of a broader \$600 million effort to enhance Downtown Pittsburgh, aiming for completion by April 2026. The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review has [more](#).

Federal

Cook Political Report Labels 3 PA House Seats as "Toss-Ups" for 2026

The Cook Political Report has identified three Pennsylvania House seats as "toss-ups" for the 2026 elections. U.S. Representatives Ryan Mackenzie (R-07), Scott Perry (R-10), and Rob Bresnahan (R-08) face uncertain re-election prospects, with the GOP holding a narrow majority in the U.S. House. PoliticsPA has [more](#).

Bipartisan Efforts Lead to Marc Fogel's Release from Russian Captivity

U.S. Senator Dave McCormick highlighted the bipartisan efforts and actions by the Trump

administration that led to the release of Marc Fogel, who had been imprisoned in Russia since 2021. Sen. McCormick praised the collaboration between Pennsylvania's elected officials and the continuous public awareness that helped bring Fogel home. The Philadelphia Inquirer has [more](#).

PA Among States Bracing for Impact as Trump Admin. Halts Clean Energy Progress

President Donald Trump's executive orders and funding freezes have disrupted state plans for wind and solar projects, creating uncertainty around clean energy development. Gov. Shapiro remains committed to reducing carbon emissions and promoting renewable energy despite these federal obstacles. The Pennsylvania Capital-Star has [more](#).
