

Broad Street Brief: Mayoral Candidate Outlines Public Safety Plan; Race for City Controller Heats Up; City to Receive Federal Funding for Water System Upgrades

CITY HALL

Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court's Ruling on School Funding May Have Important Ramifications in Philadelphia

As Pennsylvania's largest city, Philadelphia also has the state's largest — and poorest — public school system. When news broke on Tuesday afternoon that the Commonwealth Court had ruled that the state's "outdated" funding distribution model to be unconstitutional, many local proponents of system reform celebrated, as the ruling will likely have a significant impact on the School District of Philadelphia. The current formula ties school funding primarily to property taxes, which plaintiffs argued creates an inherently inequitable system in which low-wealth districts were perpetually underfunded.

2023 Mayoral Race Update: Rebecca Rhynhart Outlines Public Safety Plan

Public safety has been top of mind for just about all Philadelphia residents and officials as the city continues to experience high rates of violent crime. Naturally, this means that it has been made a priority for most if not all of the candidates running to become the city's 100th mayor. Earlier this week, former City Commissioner Rebecca Rhynhart revealed elements of her campaign's proposed public safety plan, which includes declaring a citywide state of emergency to tackle gun violence and incorporates recommendations from her former department's recent police audit, among four other points within a six-point plan.

Meet the Candidates in the Special Election for City Controller

While much of the local campaign spotlight has been taken up by the historic number of candidates vying for mayor, the race for city controller has been gaining momentum, with four candidates competing for the chance to become the city's next financial watchdog. Among them are former Acting City Controller Christy Brady — who will likely have Democratic party support — former congressional candidate and public health professional Alexandra Hunt, Citi credit risk governance officer Karen Javaruski, and real estate agent Gregg Kravitz. While this year was not originally an election year for the position, former City Controller Rebecca Rhynhart triggered the special election when she resigned to run for mayor.

Philadelphia to Receive Federal Funding for Philadelphia Water System Upgrades, Lead Pipe Removal

During a visit to Philadelphia last week, President Joe Biden announced that the city would be receiving \$160 million in funding from the bipartisan infrastructure package passed by Congress in 2021 to replace approximately 20 miles of its water mains, including any customer lead service lines that are found during the process. The funding is part of a larger \$340 million Water Infrastructure and Innovation Act investment to upgrade Philadelphia's water system. Many are hoping that the federal funding announcement will negate the rate increases recently announced by the Philadelphia Water Department, though a spokesperson for the department has stated the president's announcement will have no impact on their current plans.

New Findings Show Racial, Income Disparity in Philadelphia Home Appraisals



Joseph Hill

Managing
Director, Cozen
O'Connor
Public
Strategies

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



Brianna A. Westbrook

Government
Relations
Associate,
Cozen O'Connor
Public
Strategies

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

Related Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

New findings released by the Reinvestment Fund using data released by the federal government shows a disparity between home appraisals in primarily Black neighborhoods and primarily white neighborhoods in Philadelphia, as well as between lower-price neighborhoods and higher-priced neighborhoods. In primarily Black and lower-priced neighborhoods, home appraisals tend to be lower than the contract sale price of the home. This presents evidence for what many city officials already know anecdotally — that systemic problems in the housing market are creating an arbitrary barrier to the creation of generational wealth for many Black Philadelphians.

Philadelphians Attend State of the Union Address as Guests of Pennsylvania's Congressional Delegation

On Tuesday night, President Joe Biden gave his State of the Union address to the 118th U.S. Congress, and as has become custom, legislators invited guests from their home states and districts as a demonstration of their commitment to certain values as public servants. Two Philadelphians were among the guests of Pennsylvania's congressional delegation. Chris DeShields, the SEPTA bus driver who heroically used his Route 5 bus to stop a carjacking in Fishtown last month, attended as a guest of Representative Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania's District 2, while Dennis "Freedom" Horton, who alongside his brother Lee was imprisoned for 28 years for unknowingly giving a ride to a friend who had just committed a murder, attended as a guest Senator John Fetterman, who was instrumental in getting their sentenced commuted.
