

Pennsylvania Perspective for Monday, February 10, 2025

Pennsylvania

Gov. Shapiro's Prison Closure Plan Sparks Debate Over Savings, Community Impact

Governor Josh Shapiro's proposal to close two Pennsylvania prisons and two community corrections centers aims to save \$110 million annually, citing lower incarceration rates. While prison reform advocates see potential benefits, critics — including the prison guards' union and local lawmakers — warn of economic fallout, job losses, and possible overcrowding risks. The Pennsylvania Capital-Star has [more](#).

PA Skill Game Operators Push Back on Proposed 52% Tax

Pennsylvania skill game operators argue that Gov. Shapiro's proposed 52% tax would cripple their businesses, calling for a lower, fairer rate. While Gov. Shapiro claims the tax would boost state revenue and protect the lottery, opponents say skill games do not compete with the lottery and provide vital income for small businesses and local economies. The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review has [more](#).

Bipartisan Push to Bring Paid Family Leave to PA

A bipartisan group of Pennsylvania lawmakers is renewing efforts to establish a statewide paid family and medical leave program, similar to those in 13 other states. The proposed plan would create an insurance fund through payroll deductions, allowing workers to take paid leave for personal or family health needs. Spotlight PA has [more](#).

Sen. Rothman Elected PA GOP Chair

State Senator Greg Rothman (R-Cumberland/Dauphin/Perry) was elected chairman of the Pennsylvania Republican State Committee, with Andy Reilly appointed to lead the transition. U.S. Senator Dave McCormick praised Rothman, emphasizing party unity to advance President Donald Trump's agenda in Pennsylvania. WGAL has [more](#).

Faulty Provider Directories Leave Thousands in PA Struggling to Find Care

A state-commissioned study found widespread inaccuracies in Pennsylvania's health insurance provider directories, violating federal law and making it harder for patients to access care. Despite legal requirements to update listings every 90 days, many errors remained uncorrected for months, prompting calls for stricter enforcement. Spotlight PA has [more](#).

Philadelphia

Philadelphia Tax Debate Resurfaces as Reform Commission Prepares Report

Mayor Cherelle Parker, who kept tax rates unchanged in her first year in office, is expected to revisit Philadelphia's unique tax structure as the city's Tax Reform Commission prepares its final recommendations. While business-friendly reforms and tax cuts gain traction, progressive advocates caution against reducing revenue amid potential federal funding challenges. The Philadelphia Inquirer has [more](#).



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Philly Rents Soar, Widening Affordability Gap

Philadelphia has become one of the least affordable metro areas for renters, with median rents requiring an income far above the city's median wage. Rising demand, a tight housing market, and an influx of transplants have driven up prices, leaving many long-term residents struggling to find affordable housing. WHYY has [more](#).

Eagles Super Bowl Victory Parade Set for Friday

Philadelphia Eagles fans began celebrating their decisive Super Bowl victory on Sunday, with thousands taking to the streets. The city's streets are being cleaned ahead of the official parade on Friday, which was delayed due to weather concerns. WHYY has [more](#).

Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh Lawmakers Debate Budget Priorities

As Pennsylvania budget talks begin, Pittsburgh-area lawmakers are debating school funding, transit investment, and energy policy. Key issues include public school equity, transit shortfalls, corporate tax cuts, and balancing economic growth with environmental concerns. WESA has [more](#).

Mayor Gainey, O'Connor Clash Over City Leadership in Fiery Debate

Mayor Ed Gainey and challenger Corey O'Connor engaged in a spirited discussion on policing, city finances, and housing at a Young Democrats forum. Gainey highlighted his administration's efforts to address challenges, while O'Connor emphasized the need for new strategies to promote growth and stability in the city. WESA has [more](#).

Pittsburgh Aims to Become AI Powerhouse

Pittsburgh's AI Strike Team is working to establish the region as a leading AI hub by 2028, securing investments and repurposing industrial sites for data centers. The effort includes attracting funding, leveraging natural gas for energy demands, and competing for the \$500 billion Stargate Project. Axios Pittsburgh has [more](#).

Federal

Beltway Briefing: Federal Agencies Under Siege?

The Trump administration has frozen federal government operations and is systematically dismantling agencies, sometimes acting as a wrecking ball and other times using a strategy of gradual erosion. Will Congress step up to check the executive, or continue to rely on the courts? Listen to the latest episode featuring Public Strategies' Howard Schweitzer, Patrick Martin, and Towner French [here](#).

PA Head Start Programs Struggle with Federal Funding Delays

Some Head Start providers in Pennsylvania and across the U.S. are still unable to access federal funds due to unexplained payment delays, threatening childcare services. While Congress approved the funding, advocates are urging immediate resolution to prevent disruptions for families. WPSU has [more](#).

President Trump Signals Investment, Not Takeover, for U.S. Steel

President Trump announced that Japan's Nippon Steel will invest in U.S. Steel rather than acquiring it, following bipartisan opposition to the merger. Pittsburgh officials are seeking clarity on the potential investment, having expressed concern over jobs, environmental goals, and local economic impact. While some are cautiously optimistic, the United Steelworkers union opposes the deal.



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