

## Pennsylvania Perspective for Monday, March 24, 2025

### Pennsylvania

#### Gov. Shapiro Unveils Positive Results from Generative AI Pilot Program

Governor Josh Shapiro announced that Pennsylvania's Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Pilot Program—in partnership with OpenAI and Carnegie Mellon—saved employees an average of 95 minutes per day and improved efficiency across various roles. The program will be expanded to include more employees and tools beginning June 1. City & State Pennsylvania has [more](#).

#### Shapiro Admin Warns of Financial Distress for PA Municipalities

The Shapiro administration anticipates that some Pennsylvania municipalities may require state assistance as federal pandemic relief funds expire, prompting a request for a \$10 million increase to the Act 47 fund to aid financially distressed local governments. Spotlight PA has [more](#).

#### Lt. Gov. Davis Advocates for Crime Victim Compensation in State Budget

Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis visited Pittsburgh last week to support Gov. Shapiro's budget proposal, which includes \$9 million for the Victims Compensation Assistance Program to help crime victims with expenses like medical care, counseling, and funeral costs. WESA has [more](#).

#### Allegheny County Special Election to Decide Control of PA House

Voters in Allegheny and Lancaster Counties will head to the polls to fill two General Assembly vacancies on Tuesday. The HD-35 election will again determine control of the Pennsylvania House while the SD-36 election will fill a vacancy in the firmly Republican-majority Senate. The Pennsylvania Capital-Star has [more](#).

#### PA House Passes Bill to Aid Rural Health Care Workers with Student Loan Repayment

The Pennsylvania House passed legislation last week to provide up to \$250,000 in grants to rural medical institutions to help repay student loans for healthcare workers who commit to working in rural areas for at least three years. The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration. Center Square Pennsylvania has [more](#).

#### Concerns Raised Over Plan to Restart Three Mile Island Reactor

Nuclear regulators heard mixed reactions about Constellation Energy's plan to restart the Three Mile Island Unit 1 reactor to supply electricity for a Microsoft AI data center, with supporters citing energy needs and opponents raising environmental and safety concerns. The Pennsylvania Capital-Star has [more](#).

#### Local Governments Move to Ban Ghost Guns Despite Legal Uncertainty

Delaware County Council has taken steps to ban ghost guns, joining other Pennsylvania municipalities despite state preemption laws. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court is expected to rule soon on the legality of these local bans. The Pennsylvania Capital-Star has [more](#).

#### Spotlight PA Makes 25 Years of Board of Pardons Votes Available to the Public



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Spotlight PA has made 25 years of Pennsylvania Board of Pardons vote data publicly accessible to improve transparency and accountability in the decision-making process for commutation requests. Spotlight PA has [more](#).

## Philadelphia

### Mayor Parker Unveils \$2B Housing Plan

Mayor Chelle Parker presented a \$2 billion plan to build or preserve 30,000 housing units in Philadelphia, which includes new policy proposals like a rent subsidy program for middle-income families and reforms to streamline the City's Land Bank processes.

### Shoppers Bid Farewell as Macy's Closes Center City Store

Thousands of shoppers visited Macy's in Center City Philadelphia for the final time, reminiscing about decades of memories and hoping the historic Wanamaker Building will continue to be enjoyed by future generations. Hundreds gathered on Saturday for a daylong concert featuring the Wanamaker Organ.

## Pittsburgh

### Pittsburgh School Board to Vote on Closing 10 Schools

Pittsburgh Public Schools will consider a resolution to close ten schools, facing criticism from parents and legislators who argue the plan lacks evidence of improving equity and efficiency. The closures are part of a broader reconfiguration due to declining enrollment and underutilized facilities. Center Square Pennsylvania has [more](#).

### Proposed PRT Cuts Threaten Pittsburgh Bus Services Amid Budget Deficit

Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) announced major service cutbacks due to a projected \$100 million budget deficit, potentially leaving 19 municipalities without transit service. Gov. Shapiro has proposed increasing state funding for transit, but legislative approval is uncertain. Pittsburgh Union Progress has [more](#).

## Federal

### Beltway Briefing—The Shutdown That Wasn't

The first quarter of 2025 has been a wild ride in Washington, from the government shutdown that wasn't to a shifting political battleground between the executive branch and the courts. Listen to the latest episode featuring Public Strategies' Patrick Martin, Towner French, and Kyle Anderson [here](#).

### Gov. Shapiro Threatens Legal Action Over Proposed Federal Education Cuts

Gov. Shapiro stated he will consider suing the Trump administration if plans to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education result in Pennsylvania losing federal education funding. President Donald Trump announced last week that the U.S. Small Business Administration will manage student loans and the Department of Health & Human Services will handle special education and nutrition programs.

### PA's Mushroom, Dairy Industries May Face Challenges Due to Federal Changes

Pennsylvania's \$1.1 billion mushroom industry faces a severe labor shortage, expected to be impacted further by the Trump administration's restrictive immigration policies, while the Commonwealth's dairy industry, which produces 1.2 billion gallons of milk annually, faces significant challenges due to retaliatory tariffs from countries like China, Canada, and potentially



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### **Did President Trump Drive Voter Registration Changes in PA?**

Pennsylvania's Democratic voter registration advantage has significantly declined over the past decade, with the largest drop occurring during former President Joe Biden's term and the greatest increase in Republican registration during President Trump's first term. However, the overall growth in unaffiliated and third-party registrations suggests that President Trump's impact may not represent a durable realignment in the state's political landscape. PoliticsPA has [more](#).

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