

## Broad Street Brief: SEPTA, Law Enforcement to Receive Federal Funding; Number of Police Potentially Abusing Disability Drops Drastically

### CITY HALL

#### Philadelphia Police, District Attorney's Office to Receive ARPA Funding to Bolster Gun Violence Reduction Efforts

Last week, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf announced that Philadelphia law enforcement will be receiving an influx of \$25 million to assist in current efforts to quell the city's persistent rates of gun violence. The funding comes from the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and is part of two larger statewide grant programs administered by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency — the Local Law Enforcement Support Program and the Gun Violence Investigation & Prosecution Program. While many have celebrated the monetary assistance to help address this dire problem, some critics would like to have seen more of the funding allocated to community-based violence reduction programs rather than just to police departments and district attorney's offices. Philadelphia recently recorded its 500th homicide this year, surpassing the milestone for the second consecutive year.

#### SEPTA to Receive \$56 Million in Federal Grants to Improve Station Accessibility

On Monday, federal transit officials announced that the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) would be receiving \$56 million for renovations to six elevated stations along the system's Broad Street and Market-Frankford Lines that will increase accessibility for transit riders with mobility-related disabilities. The grant funding is expected to cover half of the total budget for the installation of elevators and ramps, among other improvements, with city and state funding to cover the rest. The stations slated for renovation were constructed well before the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.

#### Number of Police Officers on Leave Due to Injury Drops Following Inquirer Investigation

Earlier this year, the Philadelphia Inquirer published an investigation into the sudden uptick in the number of Philadelphia police officers who were deemed too injured to work — including completing non-rigorous tasks, such as testifying in court cases — by Fraternal Order of Police-selected doctors, some of whom engaged in questionable practices. These officers continued collecting their full paychecks throughout the duration of their alleged injuries, often with the addition of a 20% raise in the form of Pennsylvania Heart and Lung Act tax breaks, which have no cap on the length of the benefit or number of claims someone can submit throughout their career. The Inquirer has now found that the number of police officers on leave due to reported injuries has decreased sharply — by approximately 31% — in the time since the initial reporting and subsequent decrying of disability benefit abuse by Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw.

#### Philadelphia School District Superintendent Watlington Unveils Restructured Leadership Team

Earlier this week, Philadelphia School District Superintendent Tony B. Watlington, Sr., announced a restructuring of his leadership team in order to begin making rapid improvements to the large, urban school system. The restructuring includes several promotions and two new hires, all of which are intended to support the superintendent's three primary goals — to improve student attendance, teacher attendance, and dropout rates. While representatives of groups such as the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and The Teamsters Local 502 are somewhat skeptical, they



Joseph Hill

Managing  
Director, Cozen  
O'Connor  
Public  
Strategies

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



Brianna A. Westbrooks

Government  
Relations  
Associate,  
Cozen O'Connor  
Public  
Strategies

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

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remain hopeful that the restructuring will lead to lasting changes and have pledged to continue supporting the superintendent's goals.

#### **Philadelphia Office of Immigrant Affairs Unveils Language Services Usage Dashboard**

Last week, the Philadelphia Office of Immigrant Affairs unveiled a new Language Services Usage dashboard, which contains detailed data about which languages Philadelphians utilize when accessing city services. According to the dashboard, the city's many departments and agencies provided 87,000 interpretations and 1,600 translations between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. These interpretations and translations covered 85 different languages. The database is intended to help City employees, researchers, community organizations better understand the breadth of languages that are spoken in Philadelphia.

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