

Senate News Brief

from Senate Republicans

"These bills will allow a governor more autonomy to select a lieutenant governor in the event that a vacancy would happen in the future."

— **Senate President Pro Tempore Robert Jubelirer (R-Blair)** on a two-bill package he and **Sen. Jake Corman (R-Centre)** are sponsoring to change the way lieutenant governors are elected and succeeded in Pennsylvania. When former Lt. Governor Mark Schweiker advanced to the governorship in 2001, Sen. Jubelirer temporarily became lieutenant governor.

RENDELL TAX PLAN ONLINE CALCULATOR

Senate Republicans are providing an online calculator designed to help Pennsylvania residents determine the financial impact of Gov. Rendell's "Plan for a New Pennsylvania" on them and their families. To use it, residents simply choose their home county and then fill in three or four simple data fields to see how the plan would impact them. The direct link to the online calculator is:

<http://www.SenateRepublicanNews.com/calculator.htm>

Preview

SENATE BACK IN SESSION JUNE 2, BUDGET WORK CONTINUES

THE SENATE returns to voting session Monday, June 2 to resume work on the 2003-04 state budget. Facing a June 30 end-of-fiscal-year deadline is passage of legislation that provides state money for basic education, Pennsylvania's state-related universities, medical schools, cultural organizations, and other institutions across the state.

Because the General Assembly enacted the Governor's recommended general fund budget in March, state services and most programs will continue regardless of any delay in enacting a final package.

Review

SENATORS UNVEIL ELECTION, SUCCESSION CHANGES FOR LT. GOVERNOR

LEGISLATION THAT WOULD CHANGE the way lieutenant governors are elected and, when necessary, succeeded in Pennsylvania was unveiled Tuesday by state **Senate President Pro Tempore Robert Jubelirer (R-Blair)** and **Sen. Jake Corman (R-Centre)**.

The lawmakers said the need for change became apparent in 2001, when then-Gov. Tom Ridge accepted President Bush's request that he become federal homeland security director. As former Lt. Gov. Mark Schweiker advanced to the governorship, Sen. Jubelirer – as president pro tempore – temporarily became lieutenant governor.

Sen. Jubelirer's Senate Bill 757 would amend the state constitution to establish clear rules for the selection of a new lieutenant governor in the event that a seated lieutenant governor or governor leaves office. Sen. Corman's Senate Bull 756 would allow Pennsylvania gubernatorial candidates to choose their own running mates. [For more on the proposed legislation, please see *In the Spotlight*, below.](#)

BILL TO CREATE 911 SYSTEM FOR CELL PHONES CLEARS COMMITTEE

THE SENATE COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE, chaired by **Sen. Jake Corman (R-Centre)**, approved a measure Monday that would create a wireless E-911 emergency telephone system to allow county 911 centers across Pennsylvania to accurately pinpoint the location and phone number of a person using a cellular phone to call 911 for emergency assistance.

Under Senate Bill 432, sponsored by **Sen. Joe Conti (R-Bucks)**, the E-911 system would be administered by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and funded by a monthly \$1 surcharge on wireless telephones. The fee would be collected by wireless carriers and remitted to the state Department of Treasury. PEMA would then use this account to reimburse county 911 centers and wireless companies for the cost of providing the service. The measure was sent to the full Senate for consideration.

SENATE PASSES MEASURE TO AID LITTLE LEAGUE BACKGROUND CHECKS

THE SENATE passed legislation Tuesday that would waive the fee charged by police for criminal background checks of individuals who volunteer their time with Little League Baseball. Little League Baseball, Inc. of Williamsport has requested that background checks be provided for all volunteers.

Senate Bill 356, sponsored by **Sen. Ted Erickson (R-Delaware)**, would also clarify that volunteers receiving a free background check would have to serve without compensation. Current law waives the fee for prospective members of Big Brothers and Sisters of America, and volunteers for rape crisis centers and domestic violence programs.

In the Spotlight

UNDER SENATE BILL 757, if a lieutenant governor becomes governor, he or she would select a new lieutenant governor, subject to Senate confirmation. If a House or Senate member is chosen to fill the post, his or her seat would be declared vacant upon confirmation. Under current law, when the president pro tempore assumes the role of lieutenant governor, his or her seat is not declared vacant.

The proposed amendment would also clarify that if the lieutenant governor's seat becomes vacant while a governor is disabled, the president pro tempore would serve as governor until the governor was able to again resume his or her duties. The president pro tempore would not be required to give up the Senate post, as is now the case.

If the lieutenant governor and governor both vacate their respective offices at the same time, the president pro tempore would become governor for the remainder of the term, and his or her Senate seat would be declared vacant – as is already outlined in the state constitution.

Sen. Corman's Senate Bill 756 would allow gubernatorial candidates to choose their own running mates in Pennsylvania. Under current law, candidates for lieutenant governor run separately in the primary election, with the winner joining forces with the party's candidate for governor. Senate Bill 756 would create a process similar to the one used to select vice presidential candidates at the national level.

Fast Facts

PENNSYLVANIA NOW RANKS NEAR TOP IN TOTAL PER-PUPIL SPENDING

- Pennsylvania's ranking in per-pupil expenditures for K-12 students, according to the Corporation for Enterprise Development: *6th*
- Pennsylvania's ranking in terms of "Public School Revenue Per Student in Fall Enrollment 2000-01," according to the National Education Association: *8th*

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