

WEEKLY SESSION NOTES

SENATE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE – JOHN PIPPY, CHAIRMAN

Monday, July 13, 2009

[Senate Bill 917](#) (Robbins) would amend Act 407 of 1963 to increase the membership of the county records committee from 15 members to 16 members by adding a clerk of orphans' court to the committee. (The county records committee establishes schedules and procedures for the disposal of county records in second through eighth class counties.) **Passed: 48-0.**

[Senate Resolution 142](#) (Argall) directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to complete a study and cost analysis of the implementation of a statewide blighted property database and to report its findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Senate. **Adopted by Voice Vote.**

Tuesday, July 14, 2009

[House Bill 263](#) (Freeman) would amend the Pennsylvania Appalachian Trail Act to extend the deadline by one year for municipalities to adopt zoning ordinances to conserve and maintain those portions of the Appalachian Trail that pass through the municipality. **Passed: 47-0.**

Wednesday, July 15, 2009

[Senate Bill 491](#) (M. White) would authorize the Department of General Services, with the approval of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Governor, to convey 0.23 acres, including buildings and improvements, in Oil City, Venango County for a price to be determined through competitive bidding. No portion of the property conveyed could be used for a licensed gaming facility or it would revert to the Commonwealth. The proceeds from the sale would be deposited in the State Treasury Armory Fund. **Passed: 50-0.**

[Senate Bill 492](#) (M. White) would authorize the Department of General Services, with the approval of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Governor, to convey two tracts of land totaling 0.48 acres, including buildings and improvements, in the Second Ward of the City of Corry, Erie County. No portion of the property conveyed could be used for a licensed gaming facility or it would revert to the Commonwealth. The proceeds from the sale would be deposited in the State Treasury Armory Fund. **Passed: 50-0.**

[Senate Resolution 154](#) (Wonderling) honors and commends the Borough of Emmaus upon the 250th anniversary of its establishment. **Adopted by Voice Vote.**

[House Bill 703](#) (Burns) would amend the Landscape Architects' Registration Law to increase the continuing education requirement from 10 hours of mandatory continuing education during each two-year license period to 24 hours. The bill would also eliminate a grandfather provision permitting the State Board of Landscape Architects to grant a license to individuals without examination who have ten years of active experience and a degree from an approved institution

or persons with 15 years of active experience and a degree from a non-approved institution. This provision is no longer necessary because all persons subject to the grandfather clause are believed to be licensed. [Passed: 48-2.](#)

Executive Session

Nominations to Various Boards and Commissions. [Confirmed: 50-0.](#)

Thursday, July 16, 2009

[Senate Bill 1](#) (Browne) would create the Legislative Fiscal Office Act. The bill would establish a nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Office as an independent agency. The office would:

- Prepare revenue estimates, including federal funds, state revenues and funds from other resources, as well as any projected revenue surplus or deficit;
- By January 1, provide a baseline budget that includes levels of spending necessary to retain all current programs and statutory requirements;
- Provide an analysis of the executive budget and all related tax and revenue proposals;
- Develop, use and update econometric models to annually forecast state revenues;
- By November 15 of each year, provide an assessment of the state's current fiscal condition and a projection of what the condition will be during the next five years;
- Monitor state taxes and other receipts;
- Develop performance measures for executive level programs; and
- Establish an internet website.

By the second week of February, the Office would be required to submit to the General Assembly an initial revenue estimate for the next fiscal year. By June 15 of each year, the office would submit an official final revenue estimate for the next fiscal year. The revenue estimate would establish the maximum amount of tax revenue which may be considered for the General Appropriation Act for the ensuing fiscal year. No changes in the revenue estimates could be made by the Office unless changes in statutes affecting revenues and receipts are enacted. The Office would have to publish the methodology used to develop revenue estimates.

The revenue estimate would have to include an assessment of the Pennsylvania economy and the national economy and the impact of the existing or emerging state or national economic trends on revenue performance for the current year and the forecasted or projected revenue collections for the budget year and the succeeding year; a summary of current year-to-date revenue collections by specific tax or revenue source; and any projected revenue surplus or

deficit for the current budget year. The revenue estimate would have to be based on existing statutes and tax policy and existing or emerging state or national economic trends. The Office would also have to prepare a revenue estimate of any change in state tax law proposed as part of the annual state budget. The Governor would be required to item veto any part of any appropriation bill that causes total appropriations to exceed the official revenue estimate plus any unappropriated surplus. The Department of Revenue in conjunction with the Secretary of the Budget would make revenue estimates for the use of the Governor in preparing the budget. The Office would have to be notified of and attend any budget briefings provided by the Governor or Budget Secretary to legislative leaders under Section 619 of the Administrative Code.

Commonwealth agencies would be required to submit their agency budget requests to the Legislative Fiscal Office at the same time as they submit them to the Office of the Budget. The agencies would also be required to make monthly expenditure data available to the Office. The data would have to be provided by fund, by appropriation, by department and by organization within each department. The Governor would be required to make monthly revenue reports to the Office.

By January 31 of each year, the Office would be required to convene a meeting with the Budget Secretary and the Chairmen and Minority Chairmen of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees to discuss the Pennsylvania economy and national economy and the impact of economic trends on revenue performance for the budget year and succeeding year; recommended changes to revenue forecasting and econometric models being considered by the Office, current revenue collections, and any statutory or tax policy changes that may be recommended by the Governor or the General Assembly for the next fiscal year.

The bill would establish a committee composed of the Chairmen and Minority Chairmen of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate and House, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House to organize the office and to select a director. By May 30, 2010, the committee would have to report to the Budget Secretary and the Chairmen and Minority Chairmen of the Senate and House Finance and Appropriations Committee setting forth a plan to establish the office, including an operational budget, and to select the director of the office. The term of office of the director would be six years. The director could be removed by a concurrent resolution passed by the Senate and House of Representatives. **Passed: 30-19.**

Senate Bill 925 (Tomlinson) would amend the Massage Therapy Law to require the State Board of Massage Therapy to approve regionally accredited colleges or universities, private licensed schools, or their equivalent as determined by the board to provide required training to massage therapists. **Passed: 49-0.**

Senate Resolution 155 (Rafferty) designates September 26, 2009 as “Mesothelioma Awareness Day” in Pennsylvania. **Adopted by Voice Vote.**

Executive Session

Nominations to Various Boards and Commissions. **Confirmed: 49-0.**

Friday, July 17, 2009

[Senate Bill 568](#) (Dinniman) would authorize DGS to convey two tracts of land totaling 95.903 acres in East Vincent Township, Chester County to East Vincent Township for \$1. The land would have to be used for recreational open space for the benefit of the public at large or it would revert to the Commonwealth. In addition, no portion of the conveyance could be used for a licensed gaming facility or it would revert to the Commonwealth. The costs and fees incidental to the conveyance would be borne by the grantee. In the event that the conveyance is not executed within five years of the effective date of the act, the authorization for the conveyance would expire. As amended in the House, the bill would prohibit the conveyance of the parcel known as Tract B from being executed until living accommodations have been arranged and permanently established for all residents of the Southeastern Veterans Center that occupy buildings on the land to be conveyed. The Veterans Administration Clinic would be permitted to continue to occupy the buildings on the land until such time as accommodations have been arranged. **Concurrence in House Amendments: 49-0.**

[Senate Bill 896](#) (Scarnati) would amend Title 65 (Public Officers) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to require the Department of State to post lobbyist disclosure filings on its Internet website within seven days of receipt of the filing. **Passed: 49-0.**

Saturday, July 18, 2009

[Senate Bill 282](#) (Orie) would amend Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to permit one or more local governments, upon passage of an ordinance, and one or more municipal authorities, upon passage of a resolution, to jointly enter into an agreement to cooperate in the exercise of their respective functions, powers or responsibilities. The agreement could not delegate or transfer the governmental powers of a local government to a municipal authority, unless the municipal authority, by law, has been granted the authority to exercise the governmental powers and functions. Further, the agreement could not enlarge or diminish the powers of a municipal authority beyond those authorized or permitted by law. These agreements would not have to be submitted to the Local Government Commission for review. An additional change included in the bill would increase the amount of time that the Local Government Commission has to review other agreements from 60 days to 90 days of receipt of the agreement. **Passed: 49-0.**

[Senate Bill 284](#) (Orie) would amend the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code to permit municipalities participating in cooperative implementation agreements to amend the agreement to extend the time to enact the conforming ordinances by a period specified in the amendment. The extension could be no longer than five years. **Passed: 49-0.**

Sunday, July 19, 2009

There were no final passage votes taken in the Senate on Sunday.