

WEEKLY SESSION NOTES

SENATE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE – DAVID G. ARGALL, CHAIRMAN

Monday, April 20, 2020

[Senate Bill 462](#) (Phillips-Hill) would amend the Public School Code of 1949 to repeal numerous outdated and unnecessary provisions. [Passed: 43-7.](#)

[Senate Bill 1027](#) (Gordner) would amend the Administrative Code of 1929 to extend the sunset date for the State Geospatial Coordinating Board from June 30, 2020, to June 30, 2024. The measure would also add the Secretary of Agriculture or a designee as a member of the board and remove the requirement that local government representatives appointed by the Senate and House of Representatives be elected officials. An additional provision would allow the Board to hire an executive director with the approval of the Governor. Funding for the executive director's compensation would be evenly apportioned among the executive agencies represented on the board. [Passed: 50-0.](#)

[House Bill 752](#) (Turzai) would amend Title 34 (Game) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to remove the current price per acre restriction (\$400 per acre) on Game Fund money used for the purchase of land to be used as game lands in a second class county. The Game Commission would be authorized to purchase land to be used as game land in a second class county for what it considers to be a fair and reasonable price exclusive of federal and other cost-sharing funds and consistent with the market value of land in the locality in which the game land is located. [Passed: 50-0.](#)

Tuesday, April 21, 2020

[Senate Bill 417](#) (Martin) would amend the Pennsylvania Election Code to require successful write-in candidates to receive the same number of write-in votes as the signatures required for the position if they had filed signed nomination petitions. [Passed: 35-15.](#)

[Senate Bill 647](#) (Hutchinson) would amend Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedures) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to create the Drug Recognition Expert Training Fund in the State Treasury to be used to train law enforcement in drug recognition. Money in the Fund would be appropriated to the Pennsylvania State Police to implement and administer the training. In addition to any other costs imposed for driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, an assessment of \$5 would be imposed on offenders to fund the program. [Passed: 50-0.](#)

[Senate Bill 857](#) (Vogel) would amend Title 40 (Insurance) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to add Chapter 41 providing for the regulation of telemedicine in the Commonwealth. The measure would specifically authorize a health care provider that holds a valid license, certificate or registration from a state licensure board to practice telemedicine. The legislation would require each health licensure board to promulgate regulations, within 24 months, that are

consistent with the act to provide for and regulate telemedicine within the scope of practice and standard of care regulated by the board. The licensure boards would promulgate temporary regulations within 120 days of the effective date of the act to facilitate prompt implementation. Additional provisions would establish evaluation and treatment requirements for telemedicine, such as verifying the location and identity of the person receiving treatment and obtaining informed consent.

The bill would prohibit the use of telemedicine services or technologies for the delivery or administration of any medications or health care services which are, as of July 1, 2009, required to be delivered or administered in a health care clinic, medical facility, physician's office, hospital or ambulatory surgical facility, according to federal or state statute, regulation or promulgated regulatory rule or by the United States Food and Drug Administration Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies. A health insurance policy could not exclude a health care service for coverage solely because the service is provided through telemedicine. Medical assistance payments would be made on behalf of eligible individuals for telemedicine, consistent with federal law, if the service would be covered through an in-person encounter. **Concurrence in House Amendments: 29-21.**

Senate Bill 997 (Stefano) would amend Title 71 (State Government) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to give state police officers hired between January 1, 2019 and the effective date of the legislation 90 days to elect whether to have non-intervening military service purchased while a state police officer applied toward the calculation of retirement benefits under the binding arbitration agreement known as the DiLauro Award. The bill would extend the election period for officers who begin Federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) leave during the 90-day election period without having made an election by the number of days that the officer was on USERRA leave. If the election is made, only non-intervening military service purchased while a state police officer could apply toward the eligibility for calculation of pension or retirement benefits under the binding arbitration award. The legislation also provides for future state police officers who purchase non-intervening military service to have the service apply toward the calculation of retirement benefits under the award. **Passed: 50-0.**

Senate Bill 1108 (Browne) would create the COVID-19 Emergency Supplement to the General Appropriation Act of 2019. The measure would make supplemental federal appropriations in the amount of \$3,371,840,000 from the General Fund and \$17,114,000 from the Tobacco Settlement Fund to various departments and agencies in the Commonwealth to provide relief from the financial burdens caused by the coronavirus. Supplemental appropriations provided for in the legislation from the General Fund would include:

- \$18,155,000 to the Executive Offices;
- \$44,877,000 to the Department of Aging;
- \$6,300,000 to the Department of Agriculture;
- \$212,923,000 to the Department of Community and Economic Development;

- \$628,550,000 to the Department of Education;
- \$42,812,000 to the Department of Health;
- \$1,217,051,000 to the Department of Human Services;
- \$2,866,000 to the Department of Labor & Industry;
- \$1,819,000 to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs;
- \$14,156,000 to the Department of State;
- \$1,141,000,000 to the Department of Transportation; and
- \$41,331,000 to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

Supplemental appropriations included in the legislation from the Tobacco Settlement Fund would provide \$17,114,000 to the Department of Human Services. **Passed: 49-1.**

House Bill 1869 (Owlett) would amend Title 35 (Health and Safety) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to provide enforcement officers who contract or are diagnosed with COVID-19, or who are subject to quarantine resulting from exposure to COVID-19, to be compensated in accordance with the Heart and Lung Act. The legislation would also provide members of the Pennsylvania National Guard who are on active duty and contract or are diagnosed with COVID-19, or who are subject to quarantine resulting from exposure to COVID-19, with their average weekly wage. The General Assembly would be required to appropriate funds to provide the benefit for the National Guard members. The benefit period would be limited to 60 days for both enforcement officers and active duty members of the Pennsylvania National Guard who are temporarily incapacitated due to COVID-19. An additional provision would authorize the Department of Health to grant a waiver or exception from the staffing requirements to an EMS agency on a case-by-case basis when it is determined to be in the best interest of the EMS system and patient care. The EMS staffing waiver provision would expire three years from the date of enactment. **Passed: 50-0.**

(2020-045)