

WEEKLY SESSION NOTES

SENATE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE – MARIO M. SCAVELLO, CHAIRMAN

Monday, February 22, 2021

[Senate Bill 55](#) (Langerholc) would designate the bridge, identified as Bridge Key 8365, carrying Pennsylvania Route 53 over Little Conemaugh River in Croyle Township, Cambria County, as the Private Fredrick Kinley Memorial Bridge. [Passed: 47-0.](#)

Tuesday, February 23, 2021

[Senate Bill 36](#) (Phillips-Hill) would amend the Dog Law to provide for additional dog license fee exemptions and the transfer of dog licenses or tags. The legislation would expand the license fee exemption to include service dogs that aid in the performance of services by police departments, fire departments, and sheriff's offices, or in the performance of rescue or emergency medical services. Agencies that seek the exemption would have to provide a letter on official letterhead with the license application providing evidence that the dog performs these services. The bill would also clarify the provisions regarding the transfer of a dog license when ownership or possession is permanently transferred from one person to another within the same county. Under the changes, the application would have to be made to an agent authorized under Section 200(a), including a county treasurer, and include the information outlined in the bill. [Passed: 46-0.](#)

[Senate Bill 64](#) (Martin) would amend the Agricultural Area Security Law to direct a portion of the annual allocation from the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Fund for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements to land trusts. The legislation would require the State Land Preservation Board to annually allocate \$2,500,000 from the fund for the purpose of reimbursing land trusts for the purchase of easements and \$500,000 for the purpose of reimbursing land trusts for transaction expenses related to purchasing easements. The allocation made for the purpose of reimbursing land trusts could not exceed 10 percent of the annual allocation made to counties for easements. Up to 10 percent of the funds allocated for the purpose of reimbursing land trusts for transaction expenses could be used for administrative expenses incurred by the Department of Agriculture.

Reimbursement for the purchase of an easement through the land trust program could not exceed \$2,500 per acre or 50 percent of the appraised per-acre value, whichever is less. In addition, an easement would have to: (1) contain at least 10 acres; (2) contain at least 50 percent harvested crop, pasture or grazing land; and (3) meet the minimum application criteria for easements as contained in regulations. A land trust would have to provide matching funds equal to the amount of the reimbursement for the purchase of an easement. Up to 50 percent of the donated value of the easement could be used to satisfy the matching requirement. The legislation would prohibit reimbursement to a land trust for the expense of purchasing an easement jointly with a county and would limit reimbursement for transaction-related expenses to \$10,000 per easement. Further, if a land trust ceases to exist, an easement purchased by it which was

reimbursed for purchase costs would have to be transferred to either the county where the easement was recorded or the State Board. [Passed: 42-4.](#)

[Senate Bill 158](#) (Regan) would amend Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to establish medals of commendation for law enforcement officers and fire and emergency services personnel. The qualifications for the law enforcement medals would be established by the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission (MPOETC). Nominees for a medal could include a member of the Pennsylvania State Police, a sheriff, deputy sheriff or a police officer of a police department. A nomination for a medal could be submitted to the MPOETC by the Governor, a member of the General Assembly, the Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police, a county sheriff or the chief executive of a municipality or police department. The final decision to issue a medal would rest with the Governor. The design of each medal would be approved by the MPOETC. The authorized medals would include:

- The Blue Star of Valor - For exceptional gallantry, heroism and bravery in the face of life-threatening circumstances above and beyond the call of duty;
- The Blue Heart - For those injured in the line of duty; and
- The Medal of Ultimate Sacrifice - For those who have fallen in the line of duty.

The State Fire Commissioner would establish the qualifications for the firefighter medals. Members of fire companies would be eligible for nomination. The Governor, members of the General Assembly, or the chief executive of a municipality or fire company would be permitted to nominate an individual. The State Fire Commissioner would be required to review the applications for compliance and notify the Governor, who would make the final decision on issuance. The State Fire Commissioner would approve the design of the medals. The authorized medals would include:

- The Red Star of Valor – For exceptional gallantry, heroism and bravery in the face of life-threatening circumstances above and beyond the call of duty;
- The Red Heart – For those injured in the line of duty; and
- Medal of Ultimate Sacrifice – For those who have fallen in the line of duty.

The Director of the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services of the Department of Health would establish the qualifications for the emergency medical services medals. The Director could consult with the Pennsylvania Emergency Health Services Council to aid in carrying out the purposes of the subchapter. A member of an emergency medical services agency would be eligible for nomination. The Governor, members of the General Assembly, or the chief executive of a municipality or emergency medical services agency would be permitted to nominate an individual. The Director would be required to review the applications for compliance and notify the Governor, who would make the final decision on issuance. The Director would approve the design of the medals. The authorized medals would include:

- The Star of Life – For exceptional gallantry, heroism and bravery in the face of life-threatening circumstances above and beyond the call of duty;
- The White Heart – For those injured in the line of duty; and
- The Medal of Ultimate Sacrifice – For those who have fallen in the line of duty.
Passed: 46-0.

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Senate Bill 96 (Robinson) would amend Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to increase, from \$3 to \$5, the amount that applicants are able to contribute to the State Veterans' Trust Fund when applying for or renewing their driver's licenses, identification cards or vehicle registrations. The voluntary contribution amount would be increased from \$6 to \$10 for a two-year vehicle registration. The Department of Transportation would be required to implement the changes no later than September 1, 2022. **Passed: 46-0.**

Senate Bill 155 (Mastriano) would amend Title 12 (Commerce and Trade) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to increase the terms of members of the Pennsylvania Military Community Enhancement Commission appointed by the Governor from two years to three years. Members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives would serve two years and continue to serve until their respective successors are chosen. The Lieutenant Governor would serve for a term of four years. The changes would apply to members appointed or reappointed after the effective date of the legislation.
Passed: 46-0.

Senate Resolution 32 (A. Williams) honors the life and career of Richard "Dick" Anthony Allen of Wampum, Lawrence County, offers condolences to his friends and family and recognizes his prominence during 15 Major League Baseball seasons in the 1960s and 1970s, with special recognition of his two stints with the Philadelphia Phillies. **Adopted: 46-0.**

Senate Resolution 33 (Corman) honors the life and achievements of former State Senator Stewart J. Greenleaf, Sr. **Adopted by Voice Vote.**

House Bill 12 (Kaufer) would designate the bridge, identified as Bridge Key 46475, carrying State Route 1021 over the Susquehanna River in Wyoming Borough, Luzerne County, as the George J. Dennis, Jr., Memorial Bridge. **Passed: 46-0.**

House Bill 16 (Dowling) would designate the bridge, identified as Bridge Key 40269, located on U.S. 219 Southbound over State Route 2047, in Summit Township, Somerset County, as the SP4 Michael William Twigg Memorial Bridge. **Passed: 46-0.**

House Bill 326 (O'Neal) would amend Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to provide that during an emergency declaration the Pennsylvania National Guard, in conjunction with the Department of Health and the Pennsylvania Emergency

Management Agency (PEMA), could develop plans for the establishment and operation, in each region of the Commonwealth, of the community distribution and administration of pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and supplies and vaccine for a virus. The administration of the vaccine would include the inoculation of individuals by trained members of the Guard. The measure would also add a requirement that the Governor, within 45 days of the enactment of the legislation, provide a report to the General Assembly on the integration of the National Guard into the Commonwealth's plan for the distribution and administration of any vaccine for COVID-19. The report would have to be done in consultation with the Secretary of Health, the PEMA Director, and the Adjutant General and include the available medical units in the National Guard; mission capabilities; current and anticipated allocation of the vaccine for the Commonwealth; and federal guidance on the use of the National Guard for support missions. The term "region" would be defined as each region of the Commonwealth as identified by the Department of Health. **Passed: 46-0.**

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