



Acts Affecting County Government 2020

The following is a list of acts and vetoes affecting county government that passed in 2020. Included are the bill number and printer's number (bill version) and the date the act was signed into law. Copies of each act are available from the Legislature's website by clicking on the link.

[ACT 12](#) (SB 422, P.N. 1608; March 27, 2020) – Amends the Pennsylvania Election Code postponing Pennsylvania's primary election from April 28 to June 2, 2020. Includes other emergency provisions for the primary election to allow poll workers to come from any part of the county (rather than just the election district) and give counties flexibility to consolidate or move polling places. Further provides for additional updates to the Election Code, such as authorization for pre-canvassing of absentee and mail-in ballots starting at 7 a.m. on election day, rather than having to wait until 8 p.m., to help mitigate delays in election results due to expected demand for mail-in ballots and further adjusts the timeline to challenge applications for absentee and mail-in ballots to 5 p.m. the Friday prior to the election or during pre-canvassing (whichever is earlier) and extends the time for holding challenge hearings from five to seven days.

[ACT 15](#) (SB 841, P.N. 1623; April 20, 2020) – Amends Title 35 (Health & Safety) providing additional guidance to local governments conducting business remotely during the coronavirus pandemic, including the authority of local governments to use remote telecommunication tools for the duration of the COVID-19 disaster declaration in order to hold public meetings and conduct public business as well as authorizes remote notarization through communication technology during the COVID-19 disaster emergency. Further affirms and gives guidance to local governments regarding their authority to extend the property tax discount period until as late as Aug. 31, and to waive penalties or fees associated with late payments if the taxes are paid in full by Dec. 31, 2020.

[ACT 17](#) (HB 1869, P.N. 3582; April 29, 2020) – Amends Title 35 (Health and Safety) allowing emergency medical services (EMS) agencies to file for a waiver or exception from the basic life support (BLS) staffing requirements for extraordinary reasons as determined by the department on a case-by-case basis. Further includes a provision that would provide for COVID-19 disability benefits for law enforcement officers, as well as sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, and members of the Pennsylvania National Guard.

[ACT 18](#) (HB 360, P.N. 3660; May 8, 2020) – Amends Title 23 (Domestic Relations) extending the deadline for those whose child abuse history clearance recertifications required under the Child Protective Services Law and Pennsylvania School Code would expire during the COVID-19 disaster emergency until Dec. 31, 2020 to renew their clearances.

[ACT 24](#) (HB 2510, P.N. 3866; May 29, 2020) – Amends the Fiscal Code defining the use of County Block Grant funds distributed from the federal CARES Act to be divided amongst the counties based on population with a \$1 million minimum amount per county. Further requires any CARES funds unexpended by Dec. 1, 2020, to be redistributed through the County Block Grant program, and sets aside the remaining \$1.3 billion of federal CARES Act funding into a restricted revenue account to be used at a later date to address additional virus-related costs.

[ACT 35](#) (HB 2502, P.N. 3774; June 17, 2020) – Amends the Administrative Code requiring the Department of State to work with counties to issue a report on the 2020 primary election administration, including mail-in and absentee ballot data.

[ACT 37](#) (HB 2418, P.N. 4015; June 30, 2020) – Amends the Administrative Code to requiring the Treasury Department to identify and review outstanding debt obligations and submit a report to the General Assembly. Further provides for the reauthorization of the State Geospatial Coordinating Board until 2024.

[ACT 46](#) (HB 1564, P.N. 3901; July 1, 2020) – Amends the Title 53 (Municipalities) providing optional guidelines for assessing value of a mobile or manufactured home. Further extends the deadline for county boards of assessment appeals training an additional six months after the state’s emergency declaration is lifted. Also includes an extension for notices and appeals in Delaware County’s court-ordered countywide assessment.

[ACT 69](#) (HB 1459, P.N. 4149; July 23, 2020) – Amends Title 35 (Health and Safety) creating statewide mental health resources for emergency responders, including county 911 dispatchers.

[ACT 78](#) (SB 902, P.N. 1315; September 28, 2020) – Amends the County Code providing for vacancies for district attorneys in fourth through eighth class counties, clarifying the judges of the court of common pleas shall appoint the first assistant district attorney. Further includes if the first assistant district attorney does not satisfy the requirements of the vacancy, the judge is to appoint someone who satisfies the requirements.

[ACT 83](#) (HB 440, P.N. 4546; October 29, 2020) – Amends Title 18 (Crimes & Offenses) and Title 42 (Judiciary) expanding on the state’s historic Clean Slate law by removing an obligation to pay any outstanding court-ordered financial obligations before eligible cases can be sealed. Any restitution owed for convictions committed is not waived. The bill also requires that when a person receives a pardon, that record is automatically sealed and if they receive a not-guilty verdict the record is expunged.

[ACT 87](#) (HB 1032, P.N. 1204; October 29, 2020) – Amends the Real Estate Appraisers Certification Act adding two CPEs to serve on the State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers.

[ACT 88](#) (HB 1033, P.N. 4539; October 29, 2020) – Amends the County Code clarifying that revaluation company personnel with whom a county contracts to complete a countywide reassessment must be certified as Certified Pennsylvania Evaluators (CPEs) – the same designation that must be must be obtained by county assessors who are responsible for valuing property for real estate tax purposes; it does not affect the certification requirements for real estate appraisers. In addition, the training required in would include a course on the judicial interpretation of the uniformity clause. Further clarifies assessors in counties of the first class shall have three years from the effective date to become certified under this act.

[ACT 89](#) (HB 1439, P.N. 3629; October 29, 2020) – Amends Title 40 (Insurance) clarifying that insurers are to comply with the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA). Further provides for the form for each policy offered, issued or renewed by an insurer that is required to be filed but which the MHPAEA does not apply, the insurer shall annually file with the department a statement attesting to the non-applicability of MHPAEA to the policy form.

[ACT 91](#) (HB 1673, P.N. 4573; October 29, 2020) – Amends Title 35 (Health and Safety) changing the name of the Volunteer Fire Company, Ambulance Service and Rescue Squad Assistance program to the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Loan Program and changing the name of the Volunteer Companies Loan Fund to the Fire and Emergency Services Loan Fund. Further increases the amounts for eligible loans for Fire and EMS companies and changes the repayment period for certain loan amounts. Also includes a ballot referendum provision to question the expansion of the volunteer loan assistance program to municipal fire departments. Further changes the name of the Fire Safety Advisory Committee to the State Fire Advisory Board and provides for its membership, including one gubernatorial appointee representing CCAP.

[ACT 93](#) (HB 1838, P.N. 3590; October 29, 2020) – Amends Titles 35 (Health and Safety) and 75 (Vehicles) providing that 75% of the money from the Emergency Medical Services Operating Fund shall be disbursed so that 30% of the funds are allocated to provide training to underserved rural areas. Further requires the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to review court records to ensure that money for the Emergency Medical Services Operating Fund is being properly collected and deposited into the fund. Also requires that not less than 10% of funds shall be provided to emergency medical services agencies to assist with medical equipment purchases for ambulances.

[ACT 97](#) (HB 2370, P.N. 4061; October 29, 2020) – Amends Title 57 (Notaries Public) authorizing remote notarization through communication technology.

[ACT 98](#) (HB 2438, P.N. 4545; October 29, 2020) – Amends Title 68 (Real and Personal Property) clarifying regulations for an electric cooperative to provide broadband services or construct, operate and maintain broadband facilities through an existing easement owned, held or used by the electric cooperative.

[ACT 111](#) (SB 976, P.N. 2023; November 3, 2020) – Amends Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) codifying the ability for counties to establish veterans' courts and allow county Veterans' Courts to permit participation by defendants from adjacent counties. Further clarifies that counties may establish a veterans track within another established problem-solving court that would also provide treatment resources and veteran mentors in areas that do not have the population and/or resources to sustain a full veterans' court.

[ACT 112](#) (SB 1110, P.N. 2107; November 3, 2020) – Amends Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) clarifying state law so that counties would be able to obtain additional health data critical to making the best decisions on county-level first response and essential operations. Further provides upon a disaster emergency related to a communicable disease infection through aerosolized transmission and continuing 60 days after the expiration or termination, the Department of Health or local boards or departments of health shall release, within 24 hours of receiving information of a confirmed case, the address of the confirmed case to a public safety answering point. Additionally, the public safety answering point shall provide the address to law enforcement officers, fire department personnel, emergency medical services personnel, coroners and medical examiners if performing an essential job function.

[ACT 114](#) (HB 2536, P.N. 4626; November 23, 2020) – Omnibus amendments to the Fiscal Code providing for implementation of the FY 2020-2021 state budget. Among other provisions, provides for transfers from the state's Rainy Day fund and approximately

\$531 million from about two dozen special funds, including the Worker's Compensation Security Fund, the Recycling Fund, the Judicial Computer System Augmentation Account, three PENNVEST Funds, the Underground Storage Tank Fund and the Medical Marijuana Program Fund, plus a number of smaller-amount transfers, including \$5 million from the State Agricultural Conservation Easement Fund. Further, clarifies provisions surrounding the remaining federal CARES Act dollars, specifying any funds that are not able to be spent by Dec. 30 be transferred back to the state by Dec. 15 to assist the Department of Corrections in meeting payroll expenses for public safety, health care or other employees substantially engaged in COVID-19 mitigation and response.

[ACT 130](#) (HB 2293, P.N. 3847; November 25, 2020) – Amends Title 66 (Utilities) requiring a pipeline operator to provide emergency response plans upon request to the state Public Utility Commission, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agenda and affected county emergency management directors.

[ACT 132](#) (SB 835, P.N. 2112; November 25, 2020) – Creates the Unserved High-Speed Broadband Funding Act providing for funding of high-speed broadband service infrastructure deployment in unserved areas of Pennsylvania through the creation of a grant program for non-governmental entities to extend broadband deployment.

[ACT 134](#) (SB 1193, P.N. 2025; November 25, 2020) – Amends Title 44 (Law & Justice) increasing surcharge fee collected by the sheriff of every county for each service required for any complaint, summons, writ, or other legal paper required to be served or posted by the sheriff to fund reimbursements to counties for required sheriff and deputy sheriff training.

Appropriations Bills

[ACT 1A](#) (HB 2387, P.N. 3837; May 29, 2020) – The Commonwealth General Fund Appropriation Act for FY 2020-2021, provides for a temporary \$26 billion budget to fund the commonwealth on a five-month basis until the fiscal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic become clearer.

[ACT 2A](#) (SB 1108, P.N. 1730; May 29, 2020) – Supplement to the Commonwealth General Appropriations Act that allocates \$2.6 billion of Pennsylvania's \$3.9 billion in CARES Act dollars, including \$625 million to the 60 counties that did not previously receive direct federal CARES funds via the County Block Grant program housed in Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

[ACT 17A](#) (SB 1350, P.N. 2129; November 23, 2020) – The Commonwealth General Fund Appropriation Act for FY 2020-2021, provides the remainder of the funding for FY 2020-2021 at approximately \$11 billion, which amounts to approximately \$36.5 billion in total for the year. Does not include any tax increases or across the board cuts.

Resolutions

[HR 1100](#) (P.N. 4611; November 19, 2020) - Resolution directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to coordinate a risk-limiting audit of ballots canvassed in the 2020 general election. While the resolution was passed by the House on Nov. 19, the LBFC voted 2-1 against completing the audit during their meeting on Nov. 23.

Joint Resolutions

[SB 413](#) (P.N. 1653; #JR-2; April 29, 2020) – Amends the PA Constitution to remove language requiring a separate ballot or column for judicial retention elections as well as restrictions in the constitution to allow any qualified voter to vote by absentee ballot without excuse.

Vetoed Bills

[SB 327](#) (P.N. 1700, Veto 7; May 19, 2020) – Amended the Administrative Code providing for COVID-19 emergency statutory and regulatory suspensions and waivers reporting requirements and establishes the COVID-19 Cost and Recovery Task Force. Further provided authority for counties to develop a countywide business mitigation plan.

[SB 1027](#) (P.N. 1729, Veto 8; May 29, 2020) – Amended the Administrative Code reauthorizing the State Geospatial Coordinating Board for another four years. Further included provisions related to a 2020 primary election report, extension of judicial fees and other COVID-19 emergency statutory and regulatory suspensions and waivers reporting requirements.

[SB 1164](#) (P.N. 2006, Veto 14; November 3, 2020) – Amends the County Code adding language requiring coroners to receive data regarding a death known or suspected due to contagious disease, including any disease constituting a disaster emergency.

[HB 21](#) (P.N. 4619, Veto 18; November 30, 2020) – Amends the Real Estate Appraisers Certification Act providing for the licensure of home inspectors. Further changes the composition of the State Board of Certified Real Estate Appraisers to add two qualified home inspectors and affirms the addition of two Certified Pennsylvania Evaluators pursuant to Act 87.

[HB 1737](#) (P.N. 4625, Veto 19; November 30, 2020) – Amends Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) providing civil liability for businesses and government persons related to COVID-19 exposure unless there is clear exposure of gross negligence, recklessness, willful misconduct or intentional infliction of harm.