



CCAP 2021 RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were adopted following the CCAP 2021 Annual Conference. Under the Association's bylaws procedures, they were considered at the Conference business meeting on August 3, 2021, and then were submitted to the full CCAP membership by electronic ballot. Balloting opened on August 10, 2021, and closed on August 20, 2021. The resolutions amend the *Pennsylvania County Platform*, the Association's cumulative policy statement. The *Platform* is available on the CCAP website, www.pacounties.org.

RESOLUTION NO. 1 (*Submitted by the CCAP Assessment and Taxation Committee*) – The Association encourages counties to use the Self-Evaluation Guide developed by the Local Government Commission and AAP to evaluate the trends and factors within a county that can have a significant impact on uniformity and equity and influence the need for a countywide reassessment, and further supports the following:

- a. Tools are provided to enable counties to maintain uniformity and equity of assessments between full-scale reassessments. Such tools may include use of the common level ratio, statistical revaluation, and allowing counties to use current market values to calculate and implement adjustments to values in areas of the county that have appreciated at a faster or slower rate than the remainder of the county, without such adjustments being considered spot reassessment; and
- b. The Commonwealth establishes a state grant fund or revolving loan fund to assist counties in performing reassessments.

The self-evaluation guide for counties to use to assist in determining when a countywide reassessment may be needed was completed in 2018 and has been promoted on CCAP's website and through conference breakouts. Counties encourage the use of this tool, which helps to walk through the questions, observations and discussions that must occur prior to reaching such a conclusion, which goes beyond evaluation of deficiency in measures of equity.

RESOLUTION NO. 2 (*Submitted by the CCAP Human Services Committee*) – The Association supports timely review and consistent application of rules and procedures where counties are proceeding with their option to develop and implement merit hire systems, including a means of addressing difficulties in audits and analysis of systems and policies. The commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office of Administration or the relevant state agency must provide response to any county inquiry or application for merit hire system within 60 days of submission.

The replacement resolution supports the ongoing relationship and recognizes where difficulties must be corrected in the current relationship, and acknowledges that federal rules require a state oversight agency to maintain funding.

RESOLUTION NO. 3 (Submitted by the CCAP Elections Reform Committee) – The Association supports provisions in all amendments to the Election Code to provide realistic and adequate time and state resources to support implementation of new laws, procedures, and systems.

In the current legislative session, there has been significant interest in amending the Election Code. While counties support efforts to modernize and clarify election law, these reforms must be approached thoughtfully, with the corresponding resources, including physical facilities and infrastructure, to support successful implementation.

RESOLUTION NO. 4 (Submitted by the CCAP Elections Reform Committee) – The Association supports amendments to the Election Code that clarify the responsibilities of the county boards of elections, thereby promoting uniform interpretation of the law, while providing flexibility for counties to meet local needs.

After their experience with implementing mail-in ballots during 2020, counties seek updates to Election Code language to assure it is clear and easily understood, and that the law can be implemented in a uniform manner across the commonwealth. However, while counties must be able to implement the law consistently, it should not be so rigid as to prevent county flexibility in election operations that allows them to best meet their voters' needs and use limited resources effectively and securely.

RESOLUTION NO. 5 (Submitted by the CCAP Elections Reform Committee) – The Association supports legislation to improve the petition circulation process, including better clarity on petition content and circulation rules and increased penalties for fraudulent practices.

The amendments remove ambiguous wording from the plank, focusing instead on its intent to improve and clarify the petition process.

RESOLUTION NO. 6 (Submitted by the CCAP Elections Reform Committee) – The Association supports full and sustainable federal funding, or in absence of full federal funding full Commonwealth funding, of the equipment, registration, accessibility, and related provisions of any federal or state election laws that alter the operation of elections in the commonwealth.

The amendments remove references to outdated federal statute, and instead reflect the need for the federal and state government to provide the funding needed to support any statutory changes that impact the way counties administer elections. In addition, the amendments emphasize that this funding must take into account ongoing needs and not just one-time costs.

RESOLUTION NO. 7 *(Submitted by the CCAP Energy, Environment and Land Use Committee, as amended by the CCAP Resolutions Committee)* – The Association supports action by the administration and General Assembly to broadly view and address issues associated with energy development to minimize negative impacts on local communities throughout all development phases, from exploration through production, delivery and closure, including water quality, water quantity, flood encroachment, pipelines, maintenance of county and municipal roads and bridges, permitting, planning, human services, criminal justice, record maintenance, housing, economic development, local economies and emergency management.

Renewable energy and, in particular, solar energy, have been topics of greater interest and concern to counties. The Department of Environmental Protection has not addressed the issue of local impact if there is a massive shift in land use, water quality or run off issues, especially with respect to commercial solar development. This plank should be inclusive of other alternative energies.

RESOLUTION NO. 8 *(Submitted by the CCAP Agriculture Committee and CCAP Energy, Environment and Land Use Committee)* – The Association strongly encourages the commonwealth to provide resources which prioritize energy conservation, locally owned and used solar, respect for local land use plans, along with education and protection for property owners engaging in lease agreements with energy companies.

Energy conservation and energy efficiency retain and increase local wealth by reducing energy costs and creating and expanding jobs and new businesses. Communities most economically benefit from owning and using solar energy produced on-site rather than leasing productive land for industrial solar projects owned by outside investors. Replacing productive agricultural land with industrial solar projects owned by outside investors disrupts comprehensive land use planning and harms local economies focused on agriculture and tourism.

RESOLUTION NO. 9 *(Submitted by the CCAP Energy, Environment and Land Use Committee)* – The Association strongly encourages the General Assembly and administration to recognize the importance of county land use planning in creating an appropriate balance among environmental, infrastructure, public health and safety, economic development and energy needs.

Renewable energy and, in particular, solar energy have been topics of greater interest and concern to counties, and members wanted to ensure energy needs are fully captured in this plank.

RESOLUTION NO. 10 *(Submitted by the CCAP Human Services Committee)* – The Association supports reform of the provision of county children and youth services, including:

- a. The Needs Based Plan and Budget process should be consistent and in compliance with Act 30 of 1991, while allowing counties flexibility to meet local needs and conditions. The state funding of the annual plan including new initiatives needs to be predictable for the county.
- b. Change county match requirements from the current schedule to:
 - i. 100% state reimbursement for competitive salaries for all children and youth staff, regardless of cost center;
 - ii. 100% reimbursement by the Commonwealth for both adoption services and adoption subsidies; and
 - iii. 90% state reimbursement for all Children and Youth services.
- c. State regulations and licensing procedures which are general in nature and have flexibility and latitude for the provision of services;
- d. Implementation of a proven method of assessing the degree of safety to children;
- e. Both authority for the prioritization of service delivery and county discretion as to which children to serve based on the risk and resources available.
- f. Promotion of family preservation;
- g. Emphasis on prevention services;
- h. A shift to the “most appropriate” from the “least restrictive” placement as the best criteria for determining an out-of-home placement; and
- i. Implementation of a statewide child welfare case management data system that permits counties the flexibility to use their legacy systems, ongoing financial support for existing case management systems for as long as is necessary to properly implement any new system, and financial support for all aspects of implementation.

Implementation of a statewide child welfare case management data system that permits counties the flexibility to use their legacy systems, ongoing financial support for existing case management systems for as long as is necessary to properly implement any new system, and financial support for all aspects of implementation.

RESOLUTION NO. 11 *(Submitted by the CCAP Human Services Committee and the CCAP Resolutions Committee)* – The Association supports direct financial support for single county authorities to address the impacts of medical use of marijuana as well as any additional legislative authorizations.

Research indicates that marijuana affects the developing brain; Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) data also indicates a trend toward normalization of teen attitudes potential for increased use among youth. There are also community health risks associated with increased use of marijuana like driving under the influence. If marijuana becomes legalized for adult use in Pennsylvania, a fund should be established for the SCAs to implement prevention and education and intervention services. The process for establishing the fund

can be determined as the legislation is developed. Consideration can be given to dedicating a portion of proceeds or licensing fees.

RESOLUTION NO. 12 *(Submitted by the CCAP Human Services Committee)* – The Association supports strong partnership between the state and counties for achieving the best financial outcomes from the availability of COVID-related federal funding for mental health and crisis services, including support for an increase in HealthChoices per member per month (PMPM) reimbursements as well as community program sustainability through an ongoing commitment to increase the mental health base. Further, the Association supports expanding the partnership to include hospitals, emergency services, jails, and other non-traditional stakeholder partners to assist in the development of emergency and crisis service delivery.

The American Rescue Plan provides significant additional but short-term funding to allow for the buildout of mental health services and crisis service. This plank supports a means of partnering between the state, counties, and other local and statewide partners to assure the best use and outcome from this funding.

RESOLUTION NO. 13 *(Submitted by the CCAP Agriculture Committee and CCAP Community and Economic Development Committee)* – The Association supports legislation and other efforts to expand broadband access and deployment in Pennsylvania, working in coordination with counties, especially in rural and limited access areas, including service affordability and shared assets. Further, the Association supports state and federal funding and grants be made available to counties to assist in the development of broadband deployment, including infrastructure development and affordability programs. The Association opposes any mandates for county governments to administer broadband service or fund broadband expansion efforts.

With the COVID-19 pandemic further exposing the gaps in connectivity in the commonwealth, broadband expansion, capacity and access need to be reimaged as a part of a holistic plan that serves rural and urban areas alike and bridges the digital divide, from the first mile to the last mile. As a part of that plan, there have been many conversations about who has the obligation to invest in broadband expansion and provide service. The resolution supports efforts to address broadband needs in underserved areas, with a focus on coordination between the commonwealth, county governments, and private sector in order to create strategic investments and connect Pennsylvanians across the commonwealth without mandating county investment, but rather encouraging it.

RESOLUTION NO. 14 *(Submitted by the CCAP Community and Economic Development Committee, as amended by the CCAP Resolutions Committee)* – The Association supports, in recognition of the critical role of transportation for our communities, our industries, and our quality of life, prompt legislative action on a comprehensive set of durable funding and administrative solutions to Pennsylvania’s infrastructure and transit needs, and including options for local revenue generation as long as it is in tandem with, and not a substitute for, generation

of state resources that augment those local resources. As the state explores transportation funding options, the Association encourages the commonwealth to focus on more equitable options for commonwealth residents that result in responsible rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure and transportation systems in the commonwealth.

Transportation funding in Pennsylvania is at a critical moment in time, with decreased revenues from the gas tax due to the pandemic coupled with provisions of Act 89 set to sunset in the coming years. To explore funding, PennDOT has begun funding studies and the Governor has appointed a commission to examine funding alternatives for the state. Given the timeliness of the discussion, counties are continuing to urge the consideration of multimodal, holistic transportation funding including revenue options for counties while focusing resources on Pennsylvania's infrastructure, regardless of federal, state or local ownership. This amendment further clarifies a position on transportation funding without promotion of one source over another, and that the transportation funding discussion is already going on, and that any funding options must recognize that residents will ultimately be paying and those dollars should be wisely invested in infrastructure.

RESOLUTION NO. 15 *(Submitted by the CCAP Energy, Environment and Land Use Committee)* – The Association supports continued provision of financial assistance to municipalities through DCED's Municipal Assistance Program and other funding sources.

It is important to clarify the funding proposed in the plank and expand it to include additional sources.

RESOLUTION NO. 16 *(Submitted by the CCAP County Governance Committee and the CCAP Human Services Committee)* – In the event of any disaster or public health emergency, the Association supports the immediate implementation of an integrated response plan in close coordination, collaboration and partnership with counties by the state entities with the constitutional oversight for response and using the existing National Incident Management (NIM) model to aid in such joint response efforts.

Counties need assurance that in the event of any future emergency situation, they will be consulted in any and all response efforts with an intergovernmental collaborative approach. They must also be able to implement the tools and resources that they are already required to have in place for emergency response.

RESOLUTION NO. 17 *(Submitted by the CCAP County Governance Committee and the CCAP Human Services Committee)* – The Association supports regular and active communication and collaboration between the Department of Health and counties, particularly those without health departments, on any and all emergency response efforts that impact a county and its residents.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, counties seek an ongoing and regular forum for communication and collaboration with the Department of Health to be better prepared and better connected in the event of future emergencies or need for response efforts.

RESOLUTION NO. 18 *(Submitted by Northampton County)* – The Association supports, and incorporates by reference, the comprehensive transportation and infrastructure platform offered by the National Association of Counties, including provisions relating to implementation of the FAST Act and creation of a National Infrastructure Bank, as well as transportation philosophy, comprehensive planning, national highway program, surface transportation, public transportation, airport development, railroads, and research and development provisions. (Added 2003, amended 2004 and 2006, amended and readopted 2012, amended Spring 2013, readopted 2017, technical edit 2019)

The need for transportation and infrastructure funding and development continues to challenge residents at the county, state and federal level. Given this increased need that outweighs funding, innovation is critical to developing a solution. This amendment would update the current plank which supports NACo transportation policy and expand it to cover NACo's infrastructure policy as the two issues run hand-in-hand. The resolution would also call out the creation of the National Infrastructure Bank as one of those innovations under NACo's platform as the NACo resolution in support of a National Infrastructure Bank was adopted on July 12, 2021.

RESOLUTION NO. 19 *(Submitted by the CCAP Assessment and Taxation Committee)* – The Association supports amendments to update and streamline the Real Estate Tax Sale Law that include the following elements:

- a. Consolidates delinquent tax collection and tax sale procedures into one statute;
- b. Maintains upset sale procedures in addition to judicial sale procedures;
- c. Shortens the time frames for exposure of a property to upset sale to the first year of delinquency rather than the second year;
- d. Allows increased use of internet technology, including maintenance of dockets and publication of notices;
- e. Replaces the five percent commission retained from collections by the bureau with a separate five percent delinquency fee to be retained by the county for administrative costs; and
- f. Increases allowable fees and charges to reflect inflation.

Act 33 of 2021, signed into law on June 30, requires counties to create a tax sale registration for prospective bidders, and so language previously in the plank related to this policy is no longer relevant.