

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA  
THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

## IN THIS EDITION:

- **County Priorities Spotlight: CCAP Testifies on Complex Case Report**
- **Senate Considers 911 Reauthorization**
- **Governor Signs Bill Expanding Workers' Compensation for First Responders**
- **New Protections for Pregnant Youth in Juvenile Facilities**
- **LBFC Report on Homelessness and Housing Affordability**
- **Support Veterans with Operation Green Light**
- **CCAP Fall Conference Activities**

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## COUNTY PRIORITIES SPOTLIGHT: CCAP TESTIFIES ON COMPLEX CASE REPORT

On October 23, members of a County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) workgroup testified in front of the House Children and Youth Committee regarding their findings and recommendations in addressing complex cases in Pennsylvania released by a workgroup of 17 county leaders earlier this year. Testimony offered by Cumberland County Commissioner Jean Foschi and Brian Bornman, Executive Director for the Pennsylvania Children & Youth Administrators (PCYA) **emphasized** the limited, and often lack of, appropriate placement options to effectively support youth with complex needs in the child welfare system. As a result, children are being forced to sleep in county child welfare offices, hotels, and hospitals well beyond their discharge date – a crisis that counties across the Commonwealth are currently facing.

Recommendations identified in the **report** and highlighted during the hearing include:

- Development of a no eject/no reject program to ensure youth have a safe place to stay when there are no other options
- More concerted efforts to develop programs that accept challenging behaviors
- Greater emphasis on improving state, county, and private staffing throughout child welfare
- Revision of the nature of the licensing system for Children and Youth

Foschi also stressed the importance of increasing county mental health funding, a top **priority** for counties this year, to help stop the cycle that causes children to need complex care. Implementing the recommendations identified by the Complex Case Work Group and addressing the insufficient level of county mental health funding would support counties in helping children and families in a meaningful and productive way.

More information on the CCAP Complex Case Workgroup and the report can be found [here](#).

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## SENATE CONSIDERS 911 REAUTHORIZATION

On October 22, the Senate Appropriations Committee considered **HB 1304**, which proposes vital updates to Pennsylvania's 911 system to support the implementation of the Next Generation 911 (NG911) system. These updates include essential adjustments to the Right-to-Know Law specific to NG911, increased penalties for misuse of the 911 system, and mandatory service outage reporting requirements by communications service providers. Additionally, HB 1304 extends the period for financial audits required for each Public Safety Answering Point from every two years to every three years.

Although HB 1304 has not yet received final approval, two session days remain to pass this critical public safety legislation when the General Assembly reconvenes during the week of November 11. With the reauthorization and sustained funding of the 911 system as a top priority, counties underscore the urgent need for the General Assembly to act swiftly on this legislation. These updates are essentially to modernize the 911 statute as NG911 technology evolves, ensuring Pennsylvania has a resilient, integrated 911 system capable of delivering life-saving services efficiently in emergencies and staying in step with ongoing technological advancements.

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## GOVERNOR SIGNS EXPANSION OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

On October 29, Governor Shapiro signed **SB 365**, sponsored by Sen. Camera Bartolotta (R-Washington), into law as Act 121 of 2024. Act 121 extends workers' compensation benefits to include coverage for post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) among first responders. This legislation enables eligible first responders to receive up to 104 weeks of benefits specifically for PTSI resulting from qualified traumatic events encountered in the line of duty.

SB 365 encompasses professional and volunteer firefighters, EMS personnel, state police troopers, and local law enforcement officers. SB 365 contained several amendments that clarify key language for counties. Specifically, the definition of "peace officer" was amended to apply exclusively to officers who respond to emergency calls and requires that first responders demonstrate a direct link between their injury and a qualifying traumatic event sustained in the course of their employment. Additionally, the bill establishes a cap on PTSI-related benefits, limiting coverage to a maximum of two years.

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## NEW PROTECTIONS FOR PREGNANT YOUTH IN JUVENILE FACILITIES

On October 29, Governor Shapiro signed **HB 1509**, introduced by Rep. Napoleon Nelson (D-Montgomery), into law as Act 114 of 2024. Act 114 establishes protections and protocols for the treatment of pregnant and postpartum youth in Pennsylvania's juvenile detention facilities. The new law restricts the use of seclusion and physical restraints on these individuals, permitting such measures only in situations where immediate safety risks are present.

Act 114 further mandates that juvenile facilities provide educational programming on prenatal care, reproductive health and pregnancy hygiene. For postpartum youth, the law allows for up to 72 hours of bonding time with their newborns in a hospital setting, contingent on health and safety considerations.

Additionally, Act 114 allows 2A counties and 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> class counties to include two to four members of the public on their prison boards, by resolution of the commissioners. The provisions of the act related to pregnant and postpartum youth are effective 60 days from enactment. All other provisions of the act are effective immediately.

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## LBFC REPORT ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

In June 2023, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives adopted House Resolution 66, sponsored by Rep. Ismail Smith-Wade-El (D-Lancaster), directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to conduct a study of the impact of housing on public health in the Commonwealth.

The LBFC released its final **report** in October 2024, in which it evaluated a broad range of state and federal agencies and private organizations working towards addressing homelessness and affordable housing. Among the eight recommendations offered was a proposal to give counties more flexibility to increase the maximum allowable fee for the optional affordable housing trust fund and to index the maximum fee with inflation.

Act 137 of 1992 and Act 49 of 2005 authorized counties to generate revenue for a county-

operated trust fund for affordable housing through a supplemental recording fee on deeds and mortgages. This supplemental fee, however, currently cannot exceed 100 percent of the base recording fee, which dates back to 1993 for most counties (2005 for Philadelphia County). According to the report, 25 counties reported that they currently charge their supplemental recording fee at the maximum statutorily permitted level.

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## SUPPORT VETERANS WITH OPERATION GREEN LIGHT

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) have pulled together resources for counties to support veterans and raise awareness about important county resources available to help veterans transition to civilian life. Operation Green Light asks counties to light their buildings green from November 4-11; by shining a green light, county governments and residents will let veterans know that they are seen, appreciated and supported. More information about Operation Green Light, sample resolutions and other resources to honor the initiative can be found on NACo's [website](#).

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## CCAP FALL CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

The 2024 CCAP [Fall Conference](#) will be held at The Hotel Hershey in Dauphin County November 24-26, 2024. The CCAP policy committees have met to develop their work plans and determine what issues should be advanced as part of the Association's 2025 county legislative priorities list. During the business meeting at the conference, CCAP members will vote, both in person and virtually, on the 2025 county legislative priorities and consider the Association's 2025 action plan and other association business. Information on the voting matters will be emailed to the CCAP membership in advance of the conference.

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