

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

## COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA THE VOICE OF PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

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## COUNTY PRIORITIES SPOTLIGHT: END OF THE YEAR REPORT

In January, CCAP members announced eight county legislative priorities for 2024, including 911 funding and reauthorization, county mental health funding increase, addressing inmates with mental health issues, increasing the prevailing wage threshold, Right-to-Know Law reforms, vote-by-mail reforms, broadband access and development, and juvenile detention capacity. An end-of-year update on the progress made by counties on these priorities can be found [here](#).

Watch for more information on county priorities for 2025 in the coming weeks.

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## CCAP PRESIDENT RIVERA REFLECTS ON 2023-2024 SESSION

As I close out my term as CCAP President, I want to take the time to reflect on the legislative achievements counties have made in 2024. Together, counties, CCAP staff, and affiliates advocated for legislation and policies that benefit county governments and the vital services they provide to residents. Counties actively engaged with over 20 bills across 12 committees in both the House and Senate, providing crucial insights on how these bills would impact counties. CCAP members, staff, and affiliates testified or submitted written comments for seven legislative hearings covering policy issues such as 911 services, mental

health, county sales tax options, property reassessments, mail-in ballot reform, cybersecurity, general county government, and more. Additionally, we advocated for county priorities through more than 15 letters to the General Assembly, Governor, and Administration.

Counties successfully advocated for important legislative changes that will significantly improve services. Notably, the enactment of Act 147 of 2024, which provides for essential updates to Pennsylvania's 911 statute to enable the implementation of Next Generation 911, will revolutionize public safety for counties as the first line in emergency response. This is something counties worked together to achieve, and we should be proud of our advocacy efforts in getting this bill across the finish line.

Counties also underscored new policies that need legislative attention, including the important work from the CCAP Complex Case Work Group. In conjunction with releasing a full report of the Task Force's findings and recommendations, CCAP members and affiliates also testified to the House Children and Youth Committee to advocate for policy changes to address youth with complex needs. Additionally, the CCAP Broadband and Utility-Scale Solar Task Forces regularly met to discuss the respective work of the Task Forces to find solutions to the concerns that counties face in these areas. The work to identify and address emerging challenges that counties face is an integral part of what we do as an organization, ensuring that we, as county governments, can continue to serve our residents in the best way possible.

In addition, counties worked together as recognized partners with legislators, the Governor, and staff to advocate for other important county initiatives, including election reforms and increased county mental health funding. In the 2024-25 state budget, counties received an additional \$20 million for county mental health services for the second consecutive fiscal year – though not the full amount counties requested, this increase continues the efforts taken to rebuild the county mental health system. Although more work in these areas is needed to fully address these priorities for counties, I have no doubt that we will remain committed in our efforts to ensure that these important issues continue to be amplified to the General Assembly and Governor in 2025.

In between these achievements, counties also worked on other CCAP policies important to counties. This included providing feedback on legislation to fix issues that would negatively impact counties, providing expert testimony to legislators on key issues, and advocating for important state budget lines that help counties and residents. These policies and priorities are truly the priorities of all counties, and I respect all of the hard work that went into protecting the best interest of counties.

As we head into a new legislative session, counties are eager to continue working with our partners to advance county policies and priorities that will benefit our communities and residents all across the Commonwealth. I am proud to have served as President of CCAP in 2024, and I look forward to the work that will follow in 2025.

Have a safe and wonderful new year!

Sincerely,  
Michael Rivera, Berks County Commissioner, 2024 CCAP President.

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## **ACTS AFFECTING COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

With a new legislative session beginning in January, any piece of legislation that did not make it to the Governor's desk before November 30 will need to be reintroduced. A complete list of 2024 acts affecting county government, including the bill number, the date the bill was signed, and a brief summary can be found on the CCAP [Legislative Action Center](#).

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## **CONGRESS PASSES KEY LEGISLATION, SHORT-TERM**

# CONTINUING RESOLUTION

In the waning days of the 118<sup>th</sup> session of Congress, the House and Senate sent several critical bills that contained key priorities for counties to President Biden for his approval. Among these measures includes a short-term continuing resolution (**H.R. 10545**) that will keep the federal government funded through March 14, 2025.

- On December 18, the U.S. Senate passed the bipartisan, bicameral *Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)* (**S. 4367**). The bill authorizes several key measures for Pennsylvania, including funding for water and wastewater system upgrades, expedited flood control projects, and other critical infrastructure. The bill also included a modified version of the *Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024* (**S. 3891**), which would reauthorize the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA is vital for county economic development investments by providing critical funding for disaster resiliency efforts in our communities, strengthening workforce development, and enhancing critical infrastructure, including broadband. For more information, you can find NACo's key takeaways [here](#).
- On December 16, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act (**S.141**) passed the House chamber in a 382-12 vote. The bill passed the Senate by unanimous consent on Dec. 12. This legislation includes a scaled-back version of the CCAP-supported *Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach* (CVSO) Act, authorizing \$10 million annually for the next two fiscal years to expand and strengthen CVSOs. It is worth noting that this legislation includes a provision that the funding made available to states for county CVSO's "supplement, not supplant" funding already in place to support veteran outreach and service programs.
- As part of the short-term continuing resolution signed by President Biden on December 21, current Farm Bill programs are extended by one year through September 30, 2025. The Farm Bill was last authorized in 2018 and is generally negotiated once every five years. Counties have been monitoring developments this session around a new Farm Bill. It is expected Congress will begin negotiations around a new Farm Bill authorization in 2025.

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## NACo ACCEPTING INTERIM POLICY RESOLUTIONS

The National Association of Counties (NACo) 2025 Legislative Conference will be held in person in Washington, D.C. March 1-4, 2025. During the conference, NACo's ten policy steering committees will meet to consider adoption of interim policy resolutions that will guide NACo advocacy until the Annual Conference in July. NACo invites submissions for interim policy resolutions via email to [resolutions@naco.org](mailto:resolutions@naco.org). Additional details are available on the NACo Legislative Conference [webpage](#).

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