

RYAN A. BIZZARRO, CHAIRMAN

116 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
P.O. BOX 202003
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-2003
(717) 772-2297



HOUSE MAJORITY POLICY COMMITTEE

PAHOUSE.COM/POLICY
POLICY@PAHOUSE.NET
✕ f @ @PADEMPOLICY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH of PENNSYLVANIA

House Democratic Policy Committee Roundtable Discussion

Rural Housing

Tuesday, August 11, 2026 | 10:00 a.m.

Representative Paul Takac

OPENING REMARKS

10:00 a.m. **Rep. Paul Takac, D-Centre**

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

10:05 a.m. **Kevin Bush, Deputy Secretary for Housing**
Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

Johanna Byrd, Policy Director
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania

Gregory Scott, President + CEO
Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County

Todd Erdley, Central Regional Director
Ben Franklin Tech Partners

Q & A with Legislators

Testimony on Pennsylvania's Housing Action Plan
Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
House Democratic Policy Committee
August 11, 2026

Good morning, Chairman Bizzarro and members of the House Democratic Policy Committee. Thank you for inviting me here today to discuss Governor Shapiro's Housing Action Plan.

My name is Kevin Bush, and I am honored to serve as Pennsylvania's first-ever Deputy Secretary for Housing. Although I am new to this role and new to the Commonwealth, I have spent nearly two decades working with communities across the country in federal, state, and local government, focused on housing, disaster recovery, and long-term community resilience.

Over the past several weeks, I have met with leaders in both rural and urban areas. Their message has been clear: the national housing crisis is felt in every corner of Pennsylvania. Whether it is aging homes and blight, or rising costs and limited options, housing is one of the most pressing challenges we're facing.

Housing costs continue to rise, construction has not kept pace with demand, and much of our housing stock is old and expensive to maintain. Rural areas feel these pressures especially strongly, and families across the Commonwealth are finding it increasingly difficult to secure safe, stable, and affordable homes.

Governor Shapiro recognizes the urgency of these challenges and directed his Administration to deliver the Commonwealth's first Housing Action Plan. The Plan outlines a practical ten-year strategy focused on building and preserving housing, expanding opportunity, strengthening pathways to stability, modernizing development regulations, and improving coordination among state and local partners.

We know that we need to build 450,000 new homes by 2035. At our current build rate, we will fall short of that need by 185,000 units. We also know that over half of Pennsylvania's existing housing stock was built before 1970, including nearly 1.5 million homes that were built before 1940. The Housing Action Plan calls for expanded grant and tax credit tools, more support for small and aspiring developers, and greater investment in home repair programs.

More than 1.4 million households are cost burdened, spending more than thirty percent of their income on housing. The Plan calls for statewide first-time homebuyer initiatives, commonsense tenant protections, and expanding housing support for older adults and Pennsylvanians with disabilities.

About 14,000 of our neighbors are experiencing homelessness, with nearly 2,500 Pennsylvanians experiencing unsheltered homelessness. In 2024 alone, 120,000 Pennsylvania households faced an eviction filing or a foreclosure proceeding. The Plan recommends sealing eviction records for residents who were not legally evicted, using federal Medicaid resources to support housing

stability, and ensuring that manufactured home community residents are protected from unreasonable rent increases.

The Governor has made clear that housing is a top priority. The budget requires the development of a public database of subsidized housing and supports implementation of Investments in Health, which connects people experiencing homelessness to stable housing and services.

Governor Shapiro's sustained increase to the PHARE Fund also remains in place, a \$10 million annual increase through 2027, raising the cap to \$100 million. This year, PHFA awarded more than \$93 million for 432 affordable housing initiatives, across all 67 counties. These investments directly strengthen our ability to preserve and expand affordable housing.

These actions are a downpayment on the Governor's ten-year Housing Action Plan. As recent bipartisan housing legislation in Congress shows, there is genuine opportunity for collaboration when it comes to addressing the housing crisis. Here in Pennsylvania, several housing-related bills have left the House with bipartisan support.

Although additional funding is critically important, much of the work needed to advance the Housing Action Plan does not require appropriations. Part of the reason that housing is so expensive is because it costs so much to build. As called for in the plan, we must look at modernizing our development laws and regulations. There is real legislative momentum around zoning modernization, infill development, and accessory dwelling units, all of which are commonsense reforms that can unlock significant new housing supply. Modernizing the Municipalities Planning Code, improving permitting processes, and enabling more flexible development patterns can make measurable impact even between budget cycles. These are areas where a strong partnership with the General Assembly can move the Commonwealth forward.

Lastly, the Housing Action Plan calls for improved coordination and accountability. Government can be complex and difficult to navigate. That's why the Housing Action Plan included the creation of a dedicated housing deputate at DCED to oversee housing policy and coordinate the implementation of the Plan. This is the position that I am honored to step into and am dedicated to delivering results with the tools we have today.

By moving aggressively on what is already funded, and partnering with you on key legislative reforms, we can demonstrate clear, early impact and build momentum for future investments. This year's budget is a starting point, a downpayment, and I look forward to working closely with you to fully realize the ten-year vision of the Housing Action Plan and ensure every Pennsylvanian has access to a safe, stable, and affordable home.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee today. I welcome your questions and continued dialogue to ensure we can get this done for all Pennsylvanians.