



Local Government Committee

State Representative Robert L. Freeman
Majority Chairman

207 Irvis Office Building • P.O. Box 202136 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-2136 • 717-783-3815

January 29, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House Local Government Committee
FROM: Rep. Robert L. Freeman, Majority Chairman
SUBJECT: Voting Meeting Notification – February 4, 2026

Please be advised that the House Local Government Committee will hold a voting meeting on
Wednesday, February 4, 2026 @ 10:00 AM in 205 Ryan Office Building.

The agenda will consist of the following legislation as well as any other business that may come before the committee:

- **HB 1291 (Freeman)** – Would amend the Newspaper Advertising Act to expand the definition of “newspaper of general circulation” to allow for public notice advertisements to appear in online-only or free newspapers under certain circumstances.
- **HB 1485 (Ciresi)** – Would amend the Emergency Law Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act to provide death benefits for public works employees who die as a result of the performance of their duties.
- **HB 2146 (Freeman)** – Would amend the Sunshine Act to address the recent Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling pertaining to the 24-hour notice rule when making changes to public meeting agendas.

If you have any questions, please contact Jon Castelli, Executive Director at 717-783-3815 or jcastell@pahouse.net.

Please notify Christina Consylman at cconsylm@pahouse.net with your attendance plans. If you will not be physically present at the meeting, please submit the applicable Vote by Designation Form or Official Leave Request Form to your respective chairman prior to the meeting. For those planning to participate virtually, a Teams link will be forthcoming.

House Local Government Committee

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

10:00 AM

205 Ryan Office Building

AGENDA

Call to Order

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

Legislation to be Considered

- **HB 1291 (Freeman)** – Would amend the Newspaper Advertising Act to expand the definition of “newspaper of general circulation” to allow for public notice advertisements to appear in online-only or free newspapers under certain circumstances.
 - **Amendment A-02253 (Freeman)** – Omnibus amendment to address stakeholder concerns.
 - **Amendment A-02466 (Freeman)** – Clarifies that the requirement to publish legal notices and public notices in a newspapers of general circulation does not apply to a legal notice or public notice required by other law to be published in a legal newspaper.
- **HB 1485 (Ciresi)** – Would amend the Emergency Law Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act to provide death benefits for public works employees who die as a result of the performance of their duties.
 - **Amendment A-02381 (Freeman)** – Would extend state death benefits to coroners who die in the performance of their duties.
- **HB 2146 (Freeman)** – Would amend the Sunshine Act to address the recent Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling pertaining to the 24-hour notice rule when making changes to public meeting agendas.
 - **Amendment A-02459 (Freeman)** – Would add a new category of exceptions to the 24-hour rule for minor administrative approvals.
- **HB 2177 (Freeman)** – Would amend the Borough Code and the Third Class City Code to clarify what information a public notice advertisement regarding a proposed ordinance must contain in its brief summary.

- **HB 2179 (Sappey)** – Would amend the Second Class Township Code to clarify what information a public notice advertisement regarding a proposed ordinance must contain in its brief summary.

Any Other Business

Adjournment

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1291

Sponsor: *Freeman, #136*

Printer's No. 1466

1 Amend Bill, page 1, line 4, by inserting after "rates"
2 , for effect of failure to advertise when required
3 Amend Bill, page 1, line 11, by inserting after "303"
4 , 307
5 Amend Bill, page 5, line 9, by inserting after "of"
6 original
7 Amend Bill, page 5, line 10, by striking out "shall not" and
8 inserting
9 does not
10 Amend Bill, page 5, line 10, by striking out "25%" and
11 inserting
12 40%
13 Amend Bill, page 5, lines 11 through 14, by striking out "does not primarily serve as a platform for promoting" in line 11
14 and all of lines 12 through 14 and inserting
15 as an annual average;
16 (2) that is registered as a business with the Department
17 of State of the Commonwealth;
18 (3) that employs a local news staff;
19 (4) that has a verifiable local audience;
20 (5) that does not primarily serve as a platform for
21 commercial advertising or promote the interests of a special
22 interest group, individual or cause;
23 (6) that follows ethics and standards of printed
24 journalism; and
25
26 Amend Bill, page 5, line 15, by striking out "(2)" and
27 inserting
28 (7) that

1 Amend Bill, page 8, lines 17 through 27, by striking out all
2 of said lines and inserting

3 exists:

4 (i) a digital newspaper that posts all legal notices
5 and public notices on the Statewide public notice website
6 at no additional cost;

7 (ii) an online-only newspaper that posts all legal
8 notices and public notices on the Statewide public notice
9 website at no additional cost; or

10 (iii) a free newspaper that:

11 (A) posts all legal notices and public notices
12 on its website at no additional cost; and

13 (B) posts all legal notices and public notices
14 on the Statewide public notice website at no
15 additional cost.

16 Amend Bill, page 10, line 5, by inserting after "of"
17 original

18 Amend Bill, page 10, lines 6 and 7, by striking out "must"
19 constitute" and inserting

20 constitutes

21 Amend Bill, page 10, line 7, by inserting after "content"
22 on an annual average

23 Amend Bill, page 10, by inserting between lines 12 and 13

24 (7) uses written content as its primary reporting method
25 and means of communication;

26 (8) employs a local news staff;

27 (9) has a verifiable local audience;

28 Amend Bill, page 10, line 13, by striking out "(7)" and
29 inserting

30 (10)

31 Amend Bill, page 10, line 15, by striking out "(8)" and
32 inserting

33 (11)

34 Amend Bill, page 10, line 18, by striking out "(9)" and
35 inserting

36 (12)

37 Amend Bill, page 16, by inserting between lines 13 and 14

1 § 307. Effect of failure to advertise when required.

2 (a) General rule--No legal proceeding, matter, or case in
3 which notice is required to be given by public notice, official
4 or legal advertising, shall be binding and effective upon any
5 interested person unless such public notice, official and legal
6 advertising is [printed and] published in the newspapers of
7 general circulation, official newspapers, and legal newspapers
8 defined by this title, in the manner and as required by statute,
9 and by any rule, order, or decree of court, resolution of a
10 corporation, or unincorporated association, or ordinance, rule,
11 or regulation of any government unit, in the proper newspapers
12 of general circulation, official newspapers, and legal
13 newspapers, defined by this title, and a proof of publication is
14 filed of record in such matter or proceeding.

15 (b) Public notice published in printed newspapers--

16 (1) Public notice that is published by a printed
17 newspaper that qualifies as a newspaper of general
18 circulation on its Internet website and on the Statewide
19 public notice website shall be binding and effective if
20 notice is required by law within a time frame that does not
21 permit a printed public notice by the same printed newspaper.

22 (2) A public notice published in accordance with this
23 section shall be published in the next regularly scheduled
24 print edition following publication on the printed
25 newspaper's Internet website and the Statewide public notice
26 website.

27 Amend Bill, page 17, line 4, by inserting after "website"
28 landing page clearly and conspicuously

29 Amend Bill, page 17, by inserting between lines 15 and 16

30 (c) Duty of government units--

31 (1) The following government units shall adopt a
32 resolution declaring which newspaper of general circulation
33 shall be used to carry the government unit's legal notices
34 and public notices:

35 (i) political subdivision;

36 (ii) intermediate unit;

37 (iii) charter school;

38 (iv) cyber charter school;

39 (v) public trade school;

40 (vi) area career and technical school;

41 (vii) local agency, authority, council, board and
42 commission;

43 (viii) intergovernmental agency, authority, council,
44 board and commission;

45 (ix) regional agency, authority, council, board and
46 commission;

47 (x) municipal agency, authority, council, board and
48 commission; and

(xi) similar government entity.

(2) The resolution under paragraph (1) shall be adopted at a public meeting that adheres to the requirements of 65 C.S. Ch. 7 (relating to open meetings).

Section 3. Title 45 is amended by adding a section to read:
§ 312. Construction.

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to supersede, alter or eliminate any requirement to publish a legal or public notice in a legal newspaper as required by any other law, rule, order or decree of court.

Amend Bill, page 17, line 16, by striking out "3" and

inserting

4

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1291 (As amended by A02253)

Sponsor: *Rep. Freeman.* #136

Printer's No. 1466

- 1 Amend Bill, page 3, by inserting between lines 26 and 27
- 2 (A02253)
 - 3 Amend Bill, page 16, lines 20 and 21, by striking out all
 - 4 of said lines and inserting
 - 5 (a) Limitation.--
 - 6 (1) Legal notices and public notices may only be
published in newspapers of general circulation.
 - 7 (2) Paragraph (1) does not apply to a legal notice
or public notice required by other law to be published in
a legal newspaper.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill No: HB1291 PN1466
Committee: Local Government
Sponsor: Freeman, Robert
Date: 9/29/2025

Prepared By: Andrew Roof
(717) 787-9516
Executive Director: Jon R. Castelli

A. Brief Concept

This legislation would amend Title 45 (Legal Notices) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to continue to provide for public notices to be published in print newspapers of general circulation. However, if such a newspaper does not exist, a public notice may be published in a digital newspaper of general circulation. If neither exists, such notice may be published in a free newspaper of general circulation.

C. Analysis of the Bill

- This legislation would amend Title 45 (Legal Notices) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to provide flexibility for where public notices are required to be published. The bill would accomplish this by broadening the definition of newspapers of general circulation to a threefold definition of:
 1. A "printed newspaper" with an online website.
 2. If a printed newspaper with an online website does not exist, then a "digital newspaper".
 3. If a printed newspaper with an online website and a digital newspaper do not exist, then a "free newspaper" or an "online-only newspaper".
- A newspaper of general circulation would additionally be required to post all public notices on the Statewide public notice website at no additional cost.

Definitions:

"Printed newspaper" is defined as a printed paper or publication that:

- Bears a title or name and conveys reading or pictorial intelligence of passing events, local or general happenings.
- Is a continuous publication.
- May be a daily newspaper, weekly newspaper, newspaper of general circulation, official newspaper or a legal newspaper.
- The term does not include:
 - A printed paper or publication, regardless of size, contents or time of issue, or number of copies issued, distributed and circulated gratuitously.

"Digital newspaper" is defined as a newspaper delivered in an electronic form on a website that:

- Is formatted similarly to a printed newspaper and produced in an archivable format.
- Is a continuous publication, has been actively publishing for at least six months, and is updated at least weekly.
- Has as its primary purpose regularly reporting on matters of importance to the public relating to local and community issues in the publication area.
- One of the following:
 - Distributes, or has ownership interest in, another entity that distributes, newspapers printed in the state.
 - Is capable of circulating printed newspapers throughout the publication area; or
 - Is the digital descendent of a printed newspaper product.

"Free newspaper" is defined as a printed newspaper that:

- Is offered gratuitously and principally devoted to the dissemination of local or general news and other editorial content, which may not constitute less than 25% of overall content, does not primarily serve as a platform for promoting the interests of a special interest group, individual or cause, and follows ethnics and standards of print journalism; and
- Is a continuous publication and has been published at not less than weekly intervals in the same community and has been published for at least two years.

"Online-only newspaper" is defined as a newspaper that:

- Is available to the general public exclusively online or digitally.
- Is a continuous publication and:
 - Has been actively and continuously publishing for at least one year.
 - Contains content that must be updated daily; and
 - Is registered as a business with the Department of State of the Commonwealth.
- Is principally devoted to the dissemination of local or general news and other editorial content that must constitute not less than 25% of overall content.
- Does not serve as a platform promoting the interests or opinions of a special interest group, individual or cause.
- Is produced in an archivable format and content must be archived on a server or website.

Effective Date:

The act would take effect 60 days after being signed into law by the Governor.

G. Relevant Existing Laws

Title 45 (Legal Notices), Chapter 3 (Legal Advertising), of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, also known as the Newspaper Advertising Act, outlines public notice requirements for local governments and school districts in Pennsylvania. State law requires that prior to taking certain actions local governments and school districts publish public notice advertisements in newspapers of general circulation, which as currently defined, includes only traditional print newspapers.

E. Prior Session (Previous Bill Numbers & House/Senate Votes)

This legislation has not been previously introduced.

This document is a summary of proposed legislation and is prepared only as general information for use by the Democratic Members and Staff of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. The document does not represent the legislative intent of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and may not be utilized as such.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1485 Session of
2025

INTRODUCED BY CIRESI, MCNEILL, PROBST, SANCHEZ, BRIGGS, MADDEN,
MCANDREW, NEILSON, D. WILLIAMS, DELLOSO AND BRENNAN,
MAY 16, 2025

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, MAY 21, 2025

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of June 24, 1976 (P.L.424, No.101), entitled
2 "An act providing for the payment of death benefits to the
3 surviving spouse or children or parents of firefighters,
4 ambulance service or rescue squad members, law enforcement
5 officers or National Guard members who die as a result of the
6 performance of their duties," further providing for death
7 benefits and for definitions; and making an editorial change.

8 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
9 hereby enacts as follows:

10 Section 1. The title and section 1(a) introductory paragraph
11 and (1), (a.1), (c) and (e) of the act of June 24, 1976
12 (P.L.424, No.101), referred to as the Emergency and Law
13 Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act, are amended to read:

AN ACT

15 Providing for the payment of death benefits to the surviving
16 spouse or children or parents of firefighters, ambulance
17 service or rescue squad members, law enforcement officers,
18 public works employees or National Guard members who die as a
19 result of the performance of their duties.

20 Section 1. (a) In the event a law enforcement officer,

1 ambulance service or rescue squad member, firefighter, certified
2 hazardous material response team member, member of the
3 Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol, public works employee or National
4 Guard member dies as a result of the performance of his duties,
5 an application, including a certification of death, shall be
6 made to the department within three years of the date of such
7 death by any of the following:

8 (1) A political subdivision or an authority created by a
9 political subdivision.

10 * * *

11 (a.1) A firefighter, ambulance service or rescue squad
12 member, law enforcement officer, certified hazardous material
13 response team member, member of the Pennsylvania Civil Air
14 Patrol, public works employee or National Guard member who
15 suffers a fatal heart attack or stroke while on duty or not
16 later than 24 hours after participating in a physical training
17 exercise or responding to an emergency is presumed to have died
18 as a result of the performance of his duties for purposes of
19 this act.

20 * * *

21 (c) A volunteer ambulance service, certified hazardous
22 material response team or rescue squad member, public works
23 employee or member of the Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol shall be
24 deemed to be acting in the performance of his duties for the
25 purposes of this act going to or directly returning from an
26 emergency which the ambulance service, certified hazardous
27 material response team, rescue squad, public works employee or
28 member of the Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol attended including
29 travel from and direct return to an ambulance service, certified
30 hazardous material response team, rescue squad, public works

1 employee or Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol member's home, place
2 of business or other place where he or she shall have been when
3 he or she received the call or alarm or while participating in
4 drills in which the ambulance service, certified hazardous
5 material response team, rescue squad, municipality, municipal
6 authority or Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol shall have
7 participated or while repairing or doing other work about or on
8 any emergency vehicle or buildings and grounds of the ambulance
9 service, certified hazardous material response team, rescue
10 squad, municipality, municipal authority or Pennsylvania Civil
11 Air Patrol upon the authorization of the chief of the ambulance
12 service, certified hazardous material response team, rescue
13 squad, municipality, municipal authority or Pennsylvania Civil
14 Air Patrol or other person in charge while answering any
15 emergency calls for any purpose or while riding upon any
16 vehicles which are owned or used by the ambulance service,
17 certified hazardous material response team, rescue squad or
18 Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol.

19 * * *

20 (e) The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania shall pay out of the
21 General Fund to the surviving spouse or, if there is no
22 surviving spouse, the minor children of a National Guard member,
23 certified hazardous material response team member, public works
24 employee, member of the Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol, volunteer
25 firefighter, ambulance service or rescue squad member who died
26 as a result of the performance of his duties the sum of
27 \$100,000, adjusted in accordance with subsection (f) of this
28 section. When no spouse or minor children survive, the benefit
29 shall be paid to the parent or parents of such National Guard
30 member, certified hazardous material response team member,

1 public works employee, member of the Pennsylvania Civil Air
2 Patrol, volunteer firefighter, ambulance service or rescue squad
3 member. The benefit shall be payable whether or not the National
4 Guard member or certified hazardous material response team
5 member, public works employee, member of the Pennsylvania Civil
6 Air Patrol, volunteer firefighter, ambulance service or rescue
7 squad member died as a result of the performance of his duty
8 within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

9 * * *

10 Section 2. Section 2 of the act is amended by adding a
11 definition to read:

12 Section 2. The following words and phrases when used in this
13 act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless
14 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

15 * * *

16 "Public works employee" means an employee of a municipality
17 or municipal authority whose employment involves the care,
18 maintenance or construction of municipally owned buildings, open
19 space, parks, parking facilities, waste water treatment systems,
20 water systems, sewers or other property, roads, highways or
21 public infrastructure, and who, as a first responder, or in
22 conjunction with first responders, may respond to emergencies
23 while acting in an official capacity.

24 Section 3. This act shall take effect in 60 days.

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 1485

Sponsor: *Freeman, #136*

Printer's No. 1739

1 Amend Bill, page 1, line 7, by inserting after "benefits"
2 for public works employees, coroners and staff persons
3 Amend Bill, page 1, lines 10 through 13, by striking out all
4 of said lines and inserting

5 Section 1. The title and section 1(a) introductory paragraph
6 and (1), (a.1), (c) and (d) of the act of June 24, 1976
7 (P.L.424, No.101), referred to as the Emergency and Law
8 Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act, are amended and the
9 section is amended by adding a subsection to read:

10 Amend Bill, page 1, line 18, by inserting after "employees"
11 , coroners

12 Amend Bill, page 2, line 3, by inserting after "Patrol,"
13 coroner,

14 Amend Bill, page 2, line 14, by inserting after "Patrol,"
15 coroner,

16 Amend Bill, page 3, by inserting between lines 18 and 19
17 (d) Upon receipt of such certification, the Commonwealth
18 shall, from moneys payable out of the General Fund, pay to the
19 surviving spouse or, if there is no surviving spouse, to the
20 minor children of the paid firefighter, ambulance service or
21 rescue squad member [or], law enforcement officer, public works
22 employee or coroner who died as a result of the performance of
23 his duty the sum of \$100,000, adjusted in accordance with
24 subsection (f) of this section and an amount equal to the
25 monthly salary, adjusted in accordance with subsection (f) of
26 this section, of the deceased paid firefighter, ambulance
27 service or rescue squad member [or], law enforcement officer,
28 public works employee or coroner, less any workers' compensation
29 or pension or retirement benefits paid to such survivors, and
30 shall continue such monthly payments until there is no eligible
31 beneficiary to receive them. For the purpose of this subsection,
32 the term "eligible beneficiary" means the surviving spouse or

1 the child or children under the age of eighteen years or, if
2 attending college, under the age of twenty-three years, of the
3 firefighter, ambulance service or rescue squad member [or], law
4 enforcement officer, public works employee or coroner who died
5 as a result of the performance of his duty. When no spouse or
6 minor children survive, a single sum of \$100,000, adjusted in
7 accordance with subsection (f) of this section, shall be paid to
8 the parent or parents of such firefighter, ambulance service
9 member, rescue squad member [or], law enforcement officer,
10 public works employee or coroner.

11 Amend Bill, page 3, lines 20 through 30; page 4, lines 1
12 through 9; by striking out all of said lines on said pages and
13 inserting

14 (h) A coroner shall be deemed to be acting in the
15 performance of his duties for the purposes of this act when
16 acting in accordance with 16 Pa.C.S. Ch. 139 (relating to
17 coroner).

18 Amend Bill, page 4, lines 10 and 11, by striking out "a
19 definition" and inserting
20 definitions

21 Amend Bill, page 4, by inserting between lines 15 and 16
22 "Coroner" means an elected or appointed coroner or deputy
23 coroner or an elected or appointed medical examiner. The term
24 includes a staff person of an elected or appointed coroner or a
25 staff person of an elected or appointed medical examiner.
26 * * *

27 Amend Bill, page 4, by inserting between lines 23 and 24
28 "Staff person" means an individual in the coroner's office or
29 medical examiner's office who engages in activities relating to
30 death investigations. The term includes a medical investigator,
31 forensic technician, laboratory director, forensic supervisor,
32 forensic investigator, scientist or autopsy or histology
33 technician.

34 Section 3. Section 2.1 of the act is amended to read:
35 Section 2.1. This act shall be broadly construed to grant
36 benefits to firefighters, ambulance service or rescue squad
37 members, law enforcement officers, public works employees,
38 coroners or National Guard personnel for deaths related to the
39 performance of their duties.

40 Amend Bill, page 4, line 24, by striking out "3" and
41 inserting

42 4

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill No: HB1485 PN1739
Committee: Local Government
Sponsor: Ciresi, Joseph
Date: 1/29/2026

Prepared By: Fernando Dysico
(717) 783-3815
Executive Director: Jon R. Castelli

A. Brief Concept

Provides a death benefit payment to surviving family members of public works employees who die in the line of duty.

C. Analysis of the Bill

Amends the Emergency Law Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act (Act 101 of 1976) to provide death benefits for public works employees (employed by a municipality or municipal authority) who die in the performance of their duties.

Duties of public works employees include:

- Maintenance or construction of municipally owned buildings, open space, parks, parking facilities, waste water treatment systems, water systems, sewers or other property, roads, highways or public infrastructure.
- First respondents or works with first responders when there are emergencies.

Under this legislation, state death benefits would be provided to the surviving spouse, children who are under the age of 18 (or 23 if the child is attending college), or parents of deceased public works employees in the form of a one-time payment no less than \$100,000 which accounts for inflation.

Effective Date:

60 days.

G. Relevant Existing Laws

Act 101 of 1976

Under the Emergency and Law Enforcement Personnel Death Benefits Act, the Bureau of Finance and Risk Management in the Department of General Services administers a death benefit program for the families of public servants in the following positions who die as a result of the performance of their duties:

- Paid firefighters, ambulance service or rescue squad members, or law enforcement officers;
- Volunteer firefighters, volunteer ambulance services or rescue squad members, certified hazardous material response members;
- Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol members; and
- Pennsylvania National Guard members.

“Performance of duties” includes instances where the death occurred because of a fatal heart attack or stroke within 24 hours after a physical training exercise or response to an emergency.

The benefit is paid to the surviving spouse of the deceased individual. If there is no surviving spouse, the benefit goes to the individual’s minor children, which are children under the age of

18 or, if attending college, under the age of 23.

The law specifies that the families of certain public servants who qualify for the death benefit also qualify for a supplementary monthly benefit, and some positions have expanded definitions of "performance of duties." These benefits are explained in the following chart:

Position	Monthly Benefit	"Performance of duties" definition also includes...
National Guard member	No	
Civil Air Patrol member	No	Travel to/from emergency site and on-grounds work
Law enforcement officer	Yes	
Paid emergency responder	Yes	
Volunteer emergency responder (all those above and includes certified hazardous material response team members)	No	Travel to/from emergency site and on-grounds work. Firefighters only: includes other duties related to the Fire and Panic Act.

As shown in the table above, the families of paid emergency responders and law enforcement officers are eligible to receive a monthly payment equal to the deceased's monthly salary, minus any worker's compensation, pension, or retirement benefits. This monthly benefit is paid to the surviving spouse, or if there is no surviving spouse, to the surviving children under 18, or under 23 while attending college. The monthly payment extends until there is no longer an eligible beneficiary.

If no spouse or eligible children survive, then a single sum of \$100,000 is paid to the parent or parents of the paid emergency responders or law enforcement officers.

To receive the benefit, an application, including the death certificate, must be made within three years of the date of death to the Department of General Services by the following applicable party:

- Any survivor eligible for payment of benefits under this act or individual authorized to act on the survivor's behalf.
- A political subdivision.
- A Commonwealth agency.
- For National Guard members, the Adjutant General.
- For a member of a Commonwealth law enforcement agency, the agency head.
- For a campus police officer, the university or college president.
- In the case of the Pennsylvania Civil Air Patrol, the State Commander.

E. Prior Session (Previous Bill Numbers & House/Senate Votes)

This legislation has not been previously introduced.

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2146 Session of
2026

INTRODUCED BY FREEMAN, B. MILLER, HILL-EVANS, SHUSTERMAN,
VITALI, SANCHEZ, GREINER, RIVERA, PIELLI, WALSH, WATRO,
SAPPEY, HARKINS, ROAE, KRUPA, NEILSON, WAXMAN, OTTEN, SCOTT,
MCNEILL, KAZEEM, DONAHUE, SOLOMON, INGLIS, BOROWSKI, JAMES,
STENDER, ZIMMERMAN AND MADDEN, JANUARY 15, 2026

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, JANUARY 22, 2026

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 65 (Public Officers) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, in open meetings, further providing
3 for notification of agency business required and exceptions.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Section 712.1(a), (c) and (e)(1) of Title 65 of
7 the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes are amended to read:
8 § 712.1. Notification of agency business required and
9 exceptions.

10 (a) Official action.--Except as provided in subsection (b),
11 [(c), (d) or (e)] (c) or (d), an agency may not take official
12 action on a matter of agency business at a meeting if the matter
13 was not included in the notification required under section
14 709(c.1) (relating to public notice).

15 * * *

16 (c) Business arising within 24 hours before meeting.--An
17 agency may take official action on a matter of agency business

1 that is not listed on a meeting agenda if the matter:

2 (1) [the matter] arises or is brought to the attention
3 of the agency within the 24-hour period prior to the meeting;
4 and

5 (2) [the matter] is de minimis in nature and does not
6 involve the expenditure of funds or entering into a contract
7 or agreement [by the agency].

8 * * *

9 (e) Changes to agenda.--

10 (1) Upon majority vote of the individuals present and
11 voting during the conduct of a meeting, an agency may add a
12 matter of agency business arising under subsection (b), (c)
13 or (d) to the agenda. The reasons for the changes to the
14 agenda shall be announced at the meeting before any vote is
15 conducted to make the changes to the agenda. The agency may
16 subsequently take official action on the matter added to the
17 agenda. The agency shall post the amended agenda on the
18 agency's publicly accessible Internet website, if available,
19 and at the agency's principal office location no later than
20 the first business day following the meeting at which the
21 agenda was changed.

22 * * *

23 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL NO. 2146

Sponsor: *Freeman, #136*

Printer's No. 2786

1 Amend Bill, page 1, line 7, by inserting after "amended"
2 and the section is amended by adding a subsection
3 Amend Bill, page 1, line 11, by striking out "or" where it
4 occurs the second time and inserting a comma

5 Amend Bill, page 1, line 11, by inserting after "(d)"
6 or (d.1)

7 Amend Bill, page 2, by inserting between lines 8 and 9
8 (d.1) Minor administrative approvals.--

9 (1) An agency may take official action on a minor
10 administrative approval not listed on a meeting agenda,
11 including a minor administrative approval inadvertently
12 omitted from the agenda, that would cause a hardship if
13 delayed until the next meeting such as items discussed and
14 acted on at a previous meeting. The exception under this
15 subsection shall only include the following:

16 (i) Personnel actions after an executive session
17 held in accordance with section 708(a)(1) and restricted
18 to firing, leave, investigations or disciplining.

19 (ii) Official action, after an executive session
20 held in accordance with section 708(a)(4), authorizing
21 time-sensitive legal filings or other action related to
22 litigation by the solicitor or chief legal counsel or
23 other professional representatives. The opinion rendered
24 by the solicitor under paragraph (2) shall include a
25 description of why immediate action is required in order
26 to preserve or promote the agency's legal interests.

27 (iii) Small purchasing and bill approvals of less
28 than the current telephonic bidding threshold advertised
29 in the Pennsylvania Bulletin for repairing or mitigating
30 real or potential damage to property of the agency.

31 (iv) Small purchasing and bill approvals of less
32 than the current bidding threshold advertised in the
33 Pennsylvania Bulletin for purchase of property at an
34 auction and facing an imminent deadline.

- (v) Grant applications subject to an imminent deadline.
- (vi) Small borrowing or tax anticipation note paperwork under 53 Pa.C.S. Pt. VII Subpt. B (relating to indebtedness and borrowing) if the borrowing or note was previously approved in an open meeting.
- (vii) Minor permit approvals for sewer modules. This subparagraph shall not supersede any requirements of the act of July 31, 1968 (P.L.805, No.247), known as the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

(2) Prior to taking action on an item under this subsection, the agency shall obtain an opinion from its solicitor or chief legal counsel, as the case may be, on whether the proposed official action falls under this subsection. The opinion shall be provided by the solicitor or chief legal counsel at the meeting or in writing prior to the meeting and shall be publicly disclosed at the meeting.

18 Amend Bill, page 2, line 13, by striking out "or" where it
19 occurs the first time and inserting a comma

20 Amend Bill, page 2, line 13, by inserting after "(d)"
21 or (d.1)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill No: HB2146 PN2786
Committee: Local Government
Sponsor: Freeman, Robert
Date: 1/8/2026

Prepared By: Ryan Carpenter
(717) 783-3815,6110
Executive Director: Jon R. Castelli

A. Brief Concept

Would amend the Sunshine Act to limit what government entities may add their meeting agendas at the meeting.

C. Analysis of the Bill

This legislation would amend Title 65 (Public Officers), Section 712.1 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes to restrict which type of matters a government entity may consider at a public meeting when they were not included on a published meeting agenda at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. They may only consider matters that are:

- Concerning a real or potential emergency involving a clear and present danger to life or property,
- Brought to the attention of the government entity within 24 hours of the meeting, de minimis in nature, and do not involve the expenditure of funds or entering into a contract, or
- Brought to the attention of the government entity by a resident or taxpayer at the meeting, de minimis in nature, and do not involve the expenditure of funds or entering into a contract.

A government entity may add these matters to the agenda at the meeting by announcing the reason for changing the agenda to public and then adding them to the agenda by a majority vote.

Effective Date:

Sixty days.

G. Relevant Existing Laws

Chapter 7 (Open Meetings), Title 65 (Public Officers) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, also known as the Sunshine Act, requires Commonwealth agencies and political subdivisions to meet in public.

In 2021 the General Assembly amended the Sunshine Act to require meeting agendas of government entities to be published at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. It provided for certain exceptions to this 24-hour rule that could be brought up at a meeting without being published on the agenda 24-hours prior. Additionally, it provided that a government entity may add an item to the agenda at a meeting by a majority vote by the governing body.

In *Coleman v. Parkland School District* (2025) the Pennsylvania Supreme Court interpreted the 2021 changes as including four exceptions to the 24 hour-rule:

- Matters concerning a real or potential emergency involving a clear and present danger to life or property.
- Matters brought to the attention of the government entity within 24 hours of the meeting, de minimis in nature, and do not involve the expenditure of funds or entering into a contract.

- Matters brought to the attention of the government entity by a resident or taxpayer at the meeting, de minimis in nature, and do not involve the expenditure of funds or entering into a contract.
- A matter that was added to the agenda at the meeting by a majority vote.

This decision allows for any substantive matter to be added to the agenda at the meeting through a majority vote rather than providing the majority vote to be a procedure for considering certain issues that were not published on the agenda at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

E. Prior Session (Previous Bill Numbers & House/Senate Votes)

N/A

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL
No. 2177 Session of
2026

INTRODUCED BY FREEMAN, SAPPEY, SMITH-WADE-EL, JAMES AND
B. MILLER, JANUARY 30, 2026

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, JANUARY 30, 2026

AN ACT

1 Amending Titles 8 (Boroughs and Incorporated Towns), 11 (Cities)
2 and 16 (Counties) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes,
3 in ordinances, further providing for publication; in council,
4 further providing for publication of proposed ordinance; and,
5 in county commissioners and chief clerks, further providing
6 for ordinances and resolutions.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Section 3301.2(a) and (b) heading of Title 8 of
10 the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, amended March 8, 2024
11 (P.L.2, No.2), are amended and the section is amended by adding
12 subsections to read:

13 § 3301.2. Publication.

14 (a) Requirements.--Except as provided under this part or
15 other law, council shall publish every proposed ordinance once
16 in one newspaper of general circulation no less than seven days
17 and no more than 60 days prior to the day when council shall
18 vote on the proposed ordinance. Publication of any proposed
19 ordinance shall include all of the following:

20 [(1) The full text or the title of the ordinance and a

1 brief summary prepared by the borough solicitor setting forth
2 all the provisions in reasonable detail.]

3 (1) The full text of the proposed ordinance or the title
4 and a brief summary of the proposed ordinance. The brief
5 summary shall include a description of each of the following,
6 as applicable:

7 (i) An adoption, amendment or repeal of a tax, fee,
8 charge or assessment.

9 (ii) An adoption, amendment or repeal of a
10 regulation that provides for an offense or civil or
11 criminal penalty.

12 (iii) A provision or covenant that does one or more
13 of the following:

14 (A) Provides for the payment or disbursement of
15 funds for goods, services or contractual obligations.

16 (B) Restricts funds to a specific purpose or
17 obligation.

18 (C) Pledges funds for a specific purpose or
19 obligation.

20 (2) A reference to the borough office or other place
21 where [borough records are kept where] copies of the proposed
22 ordinance may be examined.

23 (3) A reference to the publicly accessible Internet
24 website, if any, where the full text of the proposed
25 ordinance may be examined.

26 (a.1) Legal sufficiency.--If a published summary is subject
27 to a legal challenge, a summary shall be legally sufficient if
28 the summary containing the information required under subsection
29 (a) (1) is made available for examination at the time of
30 publication in conformity with subsection (a) (2) and (3).

1 (a.2) Land use ordinances.--Notwithstanding subsection (a)
2 (1), the requirements of this section shall not supersede the
3 publication or notification requirements of a proposed ordinance
4 under the act of July 31, 1968 (P.L.805, No.247), known as the
5 Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

6 (b) [Summary] Full text availability.--If the full text is
7 not included in the publication of the proposed ordinance, the
8 following shall apply:

9 * * *

10 Section 2. Section 11018.9(b) (1) of Title 11 is amended and
11 the section is amended by adding a subsection to read:

12 § 11018.9. Publication of proposed ordinances.

13 * * *

14 (b) Contents.--

15 (1) Except as otherwise provided by law, the publication
16 of a proposed ordinance shall include [either:

17 (i) the full text; or

18 (ii) the title and a summary of the ordinance

19 setting forth the provisions in reasonable detail and a
20 reference to a place within the city where copies of the
21 proposed ordinance may be examined.] all of the
22 following:

23 (i) The full text of the proposed ordinance or the
24 title and a brief summary of the proposed ordinance. The
25 brief summary shall include a description of each of the
26 following, as applicable:

27 (A) An adoption, amendment or repeal of a tax,
28 fee, charge or assessment.

29 (B) An adoption, amendment or repeal of a
30 regulation that provides for an offense or civil or

criminal penalty.

(C) A provision or covenant that does one or more of the following:

(I) Provides for the payment or disbursement of funds for goods, services or contractual obligations.

(II) Restricts funds to a specific purpose or obligation.

(III) Pledges funds for a specific purpose or obligation.

(ii) A reference to the city office or other place
where copies of the proposed ordinance may be examined.

(iii) A reference to the publicly accessible Internet website, if any, where the full text of the proposed ordinances may be examined.

* * *

(b.1) Legal sufficiency.--If a published summary is subject to a legal challenge, a summary shall be legally sufficient if it is a summary containing the information required under subsection (1)(i) and is made available for examination at the time of application in conformity with subsection (b)(1)(ii) and (iii).

(b.2) Land use ordinances.--Notwithstanding subsection (b)
(i), the requirements of this section shall not supersede the
application or notification requirements of a proposed ordinance
under the act of July 31, 1968 (P.L.805, No.247), known as the
Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

* * *

28 Section 3. Section 12509(b)(2) of Title 16, added May 8,
29 2024 (P.L.50, No.14), is amended and the section is amended by
30 adding subsections to read:

1 § 12509. Ordinances and resolutions.

2 * * *

3 (b) Publication.--

4 * * *

5 (2) A public notice of a proposed ordinance shall
6 include [the full text of the proposed ordinance or the title
7 and a brief summary of the proposed ordinance prepared by the
8 county solicitor setting forth all the provisions in
9 reasonable detail and a reference to a location within the
10 county in which copies of the proposed ordinance may be
11 examined.] all of the following:

12 (i) The full text of the proposed ordinance or the
13 title and a brief summary of the proposed ordinance. The
14 brief summary shall include a description of each of the
15 following, as applicable:

16 (A) An adoption, amendment or repeal of a tax,
17 fee, charge or assessment.

18 (B) An adoption, amendment or repeal of a
19 regulation that provides for an offense or civil or
20 criminal penalty.

21 (C) A provision or covenant that does one or
22 more of the following:

23 (I) Provides for the payment or disbursement
24 of funds for goods, services or contractual
25 obligations.

26 (II) Restricts funds to a specific purpose
27 or obligation.

28 (III) Pledges funds for a specific purpose
29 or obligation.

30 (ii) A reference to the county office or other place

1 where copies of the proposed ordinance may be examined.

2 (iii) A reference to the publicly accessible

3 Internet website, if any, where the full text of the

4 proposed ordinances may be examined.

5 * * *

6 (b.1) Legal sufficiency.--If a published summary is subject

7 to a legal challenge, a summary shall be legally sufficient if

8 the summary containing the information required under subsection

9 (b) (2) (i) is made available for examination at the time of

10 publication in conformity with subsection (b) (2) (ii) and (iii).

11 (b.2) Land use ordinances.--Notwithstanding subsection (b)

12 (2) (i), the requirements of this section shall not supersede the

13 publication or notification requirements of a proposed ordinance

14 under the act of July 31, 1968 (P.L.805, No.247), known as the

15 Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

16 * * *

17 Section 4. The publication requirements under this act shall

18 apply to any provision of an ordinance that is advertised on or

19 after the effective date of this section.

20 Section 5. This act shall take effect in 60 days.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill No: HB2177 PN2832
Committee: Local Government
Sponsor: Freeman, Robert
Date: 1/30/2026

Prepared By: Ryan Carpenter
(717) 783-3815,6110
Executive Director: Jon R. Castelli

A. Brief Concept

Would clarify what a brief summary of a proposed borough, third class city, or county ordinance needs to include for public notice requirements.

C. Analysis of the Bill

This legislation would amend Title 8 (Boroughs and Incorporated Towns), Section 3301.2, Title 11 (Cities), Section 11018.9, and Title 16 (Counties), Section 12509, to clarify what subjects must be included in a brief summary of a public notice advertisement for a proposed ordinance. A brief summary would need to include a description of each of the following, as applicable:

- An adoption, amendment or repeal of a tax, fee, charge or assessment.
- An adoption, amendment or repeal of a regulation that provides for an offense or civil or criminal penalty.
- A provision or covenant that does one or more of the following:
 - Provides for the payment or disbursement of funds for goods, services or contractual obligations.
 - Restricts funds to a specific purpose or obligation.
 - Pledges funds for a specific purpose or obligation.

The legislation would also require that advertisements for proposed ordinances must include references to the government office where copies of the proposed ordinance may be viewed, and to the publicly accessible Internet website where the full text of the ordinance may be viewed, if such a website exists.

Furthermore, the legislation would clarify that if a published summary contains the required descriptions of the proposed ordinance and information on where to view then it, shall be considered legally sufficient. This legislation would also clarify that these new sections would not supersede publication and notification requirements of a proposed ordinance under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

Effective Date:

Sixty days.

G. Relevant Existing Laws

Currently, boroughs, third class cities, and counties are required to publish brief summaries of proposed ordinances, and the descriptions of these ordinances must be in "reasonable detail." Additionally, they are required to include reference to the office where the proposed ordinance may be examined but are not required to include a reference to where they may be viewed on a publicly accessible internet website.

A recent court case invalidated a City of Lancaster shade tree ordinance on the grounds that the "brief summary" of the ordinance, required by the municipal codes to be in "reasonable detail," was insufficient.

E. Prior Session (Previous Bill Numbers & House/Senate Votes)

N/A

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2179 Session of
2026

INTRODUCED BY SAPPEY, FREEMAN, SMITH-WADE-EL, JAMES AND
B. MILLER, JANUARY 30, 2026

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, JANUARY 30, 2026

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of May 1, 1933 (P.L.103, No.69), entitled "An
2 act concerning townships of the second class; and amending,
3 revising, consolidating and changing the law relating
4 thereto," in ordinances, further providing for ordinances.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Section 1601(a) of the act of May 1, 1933
8 (P.L.103, No.69), known as The Second Class Township Code, is
9 amended and the section is amended by adding subsections to
10 read:

11 Section 1601. Ordinances.--(a) The board of supervisors may
12 adopt ordinances in which general or specific powers of the
13 township may be exercised, and, by the enactment of subsequent
14 ordinances, the board of supervisors may amend, repeal or revise
15 existing ordinances. All proposed ordinances, whether original,
16 amended, repealed, revised, consolidated or codified, shall be
17 published not more than sixty days nor less than seven days
18 before passage at least once in one newspaper circulating
19 generally in the township. [Public notices shall include either

1 the full text or a brief summary of the proposed ordinance which
2 lists the provisions in reasonable detail and a reference to a
3 place within the township where copies of the proposed ordinance
4 may be examined.] Publication of a proposed ordinance shall
5 include the following:

6 (1) The full text of the proposed ordinance or the title and
7 a brief summary of the proposed ordinance. A brief summary shall
8 include, as applicable, a description of any:

9 (i) adoption, amendment or repeal of any tax, fee, charge or
10 assessment;

11 (ii) adoption, amendment or repeal of a regulation that
12 provides for an offense or civil or criminal penalty; and

13 (iii) provision or covenant that:

14 (A) provides for the payment or disbursement of funds for
15 goods, services or contractual obligations;

16 (B) restricts funds for a specific purpose or obligation; or
17 (C) pledges funds for a specific purpose or obligation.

18 (2) A reference to a place within the township where a copy
19 of the proposed ordinance may be examined.

20 (3) A reference to the publicly accessible Internet website,
21 if any, where the full text of the proposed ordinance may be
22 examined.

23 * * *

24 (a.2) If a brief summary published under subsection (a) is
25 the subject of a legal challenge, the summary shall be legally
26 sufficient if the summary:

27 (1) contains the information required under subsection (a)
28 (1); and

29 (2) is made available for examination at the time of
30 publication in conformity with subsection (a) (2) and (3).

1 (a.3) Notwithstanding subsection (a) (1), the requirements of
2 this section shall not supersede the publication or notification
3 requirements of a proposed ordinance under the act of July 31,
4 1968 (P.L.805, No.247), known as the "Pennsylvania
5 Municipalities Planning Code."

6 * * *

7 Section 2. The publication requirements under this act shall
8 apply to the advertisement of an ordinance occurring after the
9 effective date of this section.

10 Section 3. This act shall take effect in 60 days.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS

Bill No: HB2179 PN2833
Committee: Local Government
Sponsor: Sappey, Christina
Date: 1/30/2026

Prepared By: Ryan Carpenter
(717) 783-3815,6110
Executive Director: Jon R. Castelli

A. Brief Concept

Would clarify what a brief summary of a proposed second class township ordinance needs to include for public notice advertisement requirements.

C. Analysis of the Bill

This legislation would amend Section 1601 of the Second Class Township Code (Act 69 of 1933) to clarify what subjects must be included in a brief summary of an advertised proposed ordinance. A brief summary would need to include a description of each of the following, as applicable:

- An adoption, amendment or repeal of a tax, fee, charge or assessment.
- An adoption, amendment or repeal of a regulation that provides for an offense or civil or criminal penalty.
- A provision or covenant that does one or more of the following:
 - Provides for the payment or disbursement of funds for goods, services or contractual obligations.
 - Restricts funds to a specific purpose or obligation.
 - Pledges funds for a specific purpose or obligation.

The legislation would also require that advertisements for proposed ordinances must include references to the township office where copies of the proposed ordinance may be viewed, and to the publicly accessible Internet website where the full text of the ordinance may be viewed, if such a website exists.

Furthermore, the legislation would clarify that if a published summary contains the required descriptions of the proposed ordinance and information on where to view then it shall be considered legally sufficient. This legislation would also clarify that these new sections would not supersede publication and notification requirements of a proposed ordinance under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

Effective Date:

Sixty days.

G. Relevant Existing Laws

Currently, second class townships are required to publish brief summaries of proposed ordinances and the descriptions of these ordinances be in "reasonable detail." Additionally, they are required to include reference to the office where the proposed ordinance may be examined but are not required to include a reference to where they may be viewed on a publicly accessible internet website.

A recent court case invalidated a City of Lancaster shade tree ordinance on the grounds that the "brief summary" of the ordinance, required by the municipal codes to be in "reasonable detail," was insufficient.

E. Prior Session (Previous Bill Numbers & House/Senate Votes)

N/A

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