Week of May 14, 2018

**HEADLINES**

**2018 Primary Election Coverage**

Pennsylvania’s primary elections were held on Tuesday, May 15th. Governor Tom Wolf ran uncontested in the primary election. The GOP had three primary election candidates for Governor including Scott Wagner, Paul Mango and Laura Ellsworth. Scott Wagner, currently serving in the Pennsylvania Senate, secured 45% of the votes while Mango and Ellsworth secured 36% and 18%, respectively. Scott Wagner is a waste management business owner from York County. Wagner was an early Trump supporter whose platform consisted of fixing the pension system for state employees, school choice and school accountability for those that receive state funds, and addressing the over regulation of businesses. The Lieutenant Governor race, which has been described as historically “sleepy”, proved to be more lively this election year. The current Lt. Governor Mike Stack, who has been the subject of state investigations for verbally mistreating state workers under his jurisdiction, did not secure enough votes to be the Democratic candidate for Lt. Governor. John Fetterman, the primary election winner, is currently the mayor of Braddock in Allegheny County. Jeffrey Bartos, Scott Wanger’s running mate, is a contracting business owner from the Philadelphia area. Bartos won with 48% of the votes.

**U.S. Senate Race:**

Congressman Lou Barletta received 64% of the votes in the Republican primary. Barletta, who was endorsed by President Trump, currently represents the 11th Congressional District and is the former mayor of Hazleton in Luzerne County. He will face the Democratic incumbent, U.S. Senator Bob Casey, in the fall.

**Congressional Races:**

This year’s Congressional primaries proved to be interesting as a result of the US Supreme Court’s decision to uphold Pennsylvania’s newly drawn maps, which in a historic move, were redrawn by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. A lawsuit was filed in 2017 citing that the maps adopted in 2011 were heavily gerrymandered to support the Republican party. All Democratic and Republican incumbents won their races for their respective parties’ nominations.

**Pennsylvania State Senate Races:**

Incumbent State Senator Randy Vulakovich lost the Republican nomination to Jeremy Shaffer, who secured 59% of the votes. Sen. Vulakovich serves as the Chairman of the Senate Veteran Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee and has served in the Pennsylvania Senate since 2012. State Representative Kristin Phillips-Hill won the Republican nomination for the seat vacated by Scott Wagner. State Representative Judy Ward won the Republican nomination for the seat vacated by John Eichelberger. There were 3 open seats in the Senate, the final seat being the one vacated by Sen. Stewart Greenleaf, whose son Stewart Greenleaf Jr. ran uncontested for the Republican nomination.

**Pennsylvania House of Representatives Races:**

Tim O’Neal (R) won the special election for the 48th legislative district, flipping the district from a Democratic to a Republican seat. The 48th district is in Washington County. Republican Clint Owlett won the special election in the 68th district. Owlett will be representing the 68th legislative district which includes Tioga County and part of Bradford County. Democrat Helen Tai won the special election with 51% of the votes, flipping the seat from Republican to Democratic. The 178th district in is Bucks County. The flip in seats in the special election reflects the increased turnout of the Republicans in Washington County and the Democrats in Bucks County, due to high profile Congressional primaries.

**Contested Incumbents:**

In Allegheny County, longtime Democratic incumbents Dom and Paul Costa were both defeated, leaving Sara Innamorato to represent the 21st District on the ballot in November and Summer Lee to represent the 34th district.

A full summary of the primary election coverage can be found [**HERE.**](https://drive.google.com/open?id=11_BBhWtDS0LkpEQC6d2-oRipDjU_kDqg)

**CO-SPONSOR MEMOS**

Rep. Brian Ellis, Chairman of the House Commerce Committee, circulated co-sponsorship memorandum for legislation to prevent local taxing jurisdictions from imposing a per capita tax on businesses in the Commonwealth. This legislation is in response to the tax imposed on businesses in Seattle that make at least $20 million in gross revenues.

Sen. Thomas Killion circulated a memo for legislation which would amend the Public School Code with regard to educational tax credits and the definition of “pass-through entity.” It would amend the definition of “pass-through entity in Section 2002-B of the Public School Code to also include qualified Subchapter S trusts, as defined in Section 1361(d)(3) of the internal Revenue Code of 1986.

**Supreme Court clears the way for sports betting in state’s casinos**

A ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court will clear the way for Pennsylvania’s casinos to offer sports betting. The Supreme Court’s decision struck down a 1992 federal law that barred state-authorized sports betting, with a few exceptions. New Jersey challenged the law, arguing that Congress overstepped its authority in enacting it. The high court agreed, holding that although Congress has the authority to regulate sports gambling directly, if it elects not to do so, each state is free to act on its own.

**Senator Vulakovich Proposes Price Gouging Reforms**

While efforts to prevent price gouging during an emergency are essential, the state’s guidelines for that process need fine tuning to ensure that they are specifically targeting that issue and are kept in place for an appropriate amount of time, according to Senator Randy Vulakovich, Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee. Senate Bill 1172 would modify [Act 133 of 2006](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/LEGIS/LI/uconsCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&yr=2006&sessInd=0&smthLwInd=0&act=0133.), the Pennsylvania Price Gouging Act, to ensure that a Governor’s emergency declaration does not place an undue and unnecessary burden on operations and businesses outside of and unrelated to the disaster. Act 133 prohibits sellers from charging “unconscionably excessive” prices for all consumer goods and services when a state of disaster emergency is declared by the Governor. This prohibition is effective for the duration of the declaration (initially 90 days, but renewable) plus an additional 30 days after termination. On Jan.10, 2018, Governor Wolf signed a disaster declaration to combat the heroin and opioid epidemic – the first such declaration for a non-natural disaster incident. The Governor has since extended that disaster declaration. Senator Vulakovich said the lifespan 90 days or more for the restrictions is also an area that needs to be reviewed. Senator Vulakovich’s legislation would require a separate declaration from the emergency declaration to trigger pricing restrictions so they apply only when needed. It would also limit the duration of pricing restrictions to 15 days -- with extensions up to 60 days -- and limits the scope to only those goods and services necessary for use or consumption.

**Causer Proposes Rural Broadband Deployment Act**

Working to bring broadband infrastructure and connectivity to rural communities in the 67th Legislative District and across the Northern Tier, Rep. Martin Causer (R-Turtlepoint) has introduced legislation to establish the Rural Pennsylvania Broadband Deployment Act. House Bill 2293 would establish a new fund within the State Treasury into which federal (and other) funding can be deposited to use for deployment of rural broadband/high-speed internet services. The legislation would also create an advisory board within the Department of Community and Economic Development to not only investigate and make recommendations for the improved deployment of these services, but also to solicit, review and recommend proposals to use the funding. The bill has been referred to the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee for consideration.

**PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION SCHEDULE:**

**2018 SENATE SESSION SCHEDULE**

May                21, 22, 23

June               4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

**2018 HOUSE SESSION SCHEDULE**

May                22, 23, 24

June                4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

**UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND HEARINGS**

[**House Finance**](http://www.ctbpls.com/htbin/web_com.com?Comnam=018&Session=17R)
**WEDNESDAY - 5/23/18**
**9:00 a.m., Room B31, Main Capitol**

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|  | [HB 2167](http://www.ctbpls.com/htbin/web_index?BILL_NUMBER=HB02167&SESSION=17R)   | [Benninghoff, Kerry](http://www.ctbpls.com/htbin/web_member?17R171) | Amends the Fiscal Code, in disposition of abandoned and unclaimed property, further providing for property held by business associations. |

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[**House Urban Affairs**](http://www.ctbpls.com/htbin/web_com.com?Comnam=032&Session=17R)
**WEDNESDAY - 5/23/18**
**9:00 a.m., Room 205, Ryan Office Building**

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|  | [SB 851](http://www.ctbpls.com/htbin/web_index?BILL_NUMBER=SB00851&SESSION=17R)   | [Argall, David](http://www.ctbpls.com/htbin/web_member?17R329) | Amends the Real Estate Tax Sale Law, in short title & definitions, further providing for definitions; for repurchase by owner & providing for limitation on trusteeship & for ownership interests & responsibilities of property owner. |

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[**House Tourism and Recreational Development**](http://www.ctbpls.com/htbin/web_com.com?Comnam=031&Session=17R)
**THURSDAY - 5/24/18**
**9:30 a.m., Room B31 Main Capitol**

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|  | [HB 1810](http://www.ctbpls.com/htbin/web_index?BILL_NUMBER=HB01810&SESSION=17R)   | [Heffley, Doyle](http://www.ctbpls.com/htbin/web_member?17R122) | Amends Title 48 (Lodging and Housing), in lodging, providing for hosting platforms. |

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**Department of Revenue Updates**

**​** None