



PAACC Pennsylvania Update

January 2, 2018

PAACC State Capitol Snap Shot

The House and Senate met briefly in non-voting session on January 2, 2018, as required by the Pennsylvania Constitution. The House swore in a new Member, Representative Jeanne McNeill (D – Lehigh). The Senate unanimously swore in Senator Joe Scarnati as President Pro Tempore of the Senate. In his acceptance remarks, Senator Scarnati said the “most important task we can ever embark on... [is] improving the economic climate and creating jobs here in the Commonwealth.” Both the House and Senate return to voting session on January 22, 2018.

Despite several attempts by House Democrats and some Republicans, the House completed December 2018 without passing a severance tax on natural gas in December. It is expected that the severance tax bill, House Bill 1401 (DiGiralomo – R, Bucks), will be debated again when the Senate returns in January.

The Governor’s office released nearly \$179 million in funding for capital projects under the Redevelopment Assistance and Capital Program (RACP) in late December, including over \$34 million for projects in Allegheny County. A description of the RACP programs and a listing of the funded projects can be found [here](#).

PAACC Legislative Report*

Employee Benefits

On December 12, 2017, a press conference was held to build support for several employee benefit-related bills:

- HB 701 (Donatucci), known as the Healthy Families, Healthy Workplaces Act provides for a paid sick leave at a minimum of one hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked by an employee at a maximum of 52 hours, with exceptions for employers with fewer than 10 individuals.
- HB 1634 (Briggs) The Paid Family Leave Act provides for paid family and medical leave for eligible employees under certain circumstances and for regulations by the Department of Labor and Industry. An employer, as defined in the bill, shall provide not less than 12 weeks of paid leave to an

*Information for the Legislative Report was derived from each bill’s co-sponsorship memo and the bill text.

eligible employee to care for a child during the period extending from the beginning of a pregnancy to one year after the birth, adoption or placement of the child. An eligible employee who takes leave is entitled to the same protections and rights that an eligible employee is entitled to under the Family and Medical Leave Act.

- SB 150 (Leach) amends the Minimum Wage Act, increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. In following years the minimum wage will be calculated based on the annual percentage increase in the CPI-U, rounding to the next highest multiple of five cents.
- SB 207 (Hughes) The Healthy Employee and Healthy Workplace Act provides for mandatory statewide employer-paid sick leave for employees for diagnosis, treatment, care, counseling, and emergencies and provides for civil penalties and remedies for violations.
- SB 862 (Leach) The Paid Family Leave Act provides not less than 12 weeks of leave at full pay shall be provided for new parents who work more than 20 hours per week at companies with at least 20 employees. Stipulates that eligible employees taking leave are entitled to the same protections and rights that an eligible employee is entitled to under the Family Medical Leave Act.

Public Utilities

On December 21, 2017, Governor Wolf signed HB 1490 into law. Introduced by Speaker of the House Turzai, the bill is intended to place the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority under the oversight of the Public Utility Commission. An authority shall continue to provide service to the authority's customers in accordance with a prior tariff until the effective date of a commission's order approving a new tariff. The compliance plan shall include provisions to bring an authority's existing information technology, accounting, billing, collection and other operating systems and procedures into compliance with the requirements of the commission. Also requires the commission to review the compliance plan. The commission may require an authority to maintain, repair and replace facilities and equipment used to provide services and the offices of Consumer Advocate and Business Advocate shall represent the interests of their respective consumers in such matters. The commission shall permit an authority to impose, charge or collect rates or charges as necessary to permit the authority to comply with its covenants to the holders of any bonds or other financial obligations. The bill is effective immediately.

Pittsburgh Parks Referendum

Rep. Readshaw introduced HB 1962 on Dec. 11, 2017 to permit a referendum question to be placed on an election ballot within the City of Pittsburgh authorizing a specific revenue source to be dedicated to the establishment, maintenance and aid to a public park within the city. The bill was referred to the House Local Government Committee.