

GNP Public Policy Summary February 16, 2017



Public Policy Summary February 16, 2017

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Below is a summary of key public policy issues impacting the Pittsburgh region's nonprofit sector. Key stories include:

[Upcoming GNP Events](#)

- Tuesday February 21: The Wilson Group and their nonprofit partners have designed a session for executives and office managers alike to show how making small changes now to your current workflow will yield big savings on time and money over the long term. You'll learn how to get the most out of your current technology to work smarter and save money. Click [here](#) to learn more.

[Advocacy Sections](#)

- Many of your organizations are mobilizing around key issues, and we want to make sure that you can share your activities with GNP members. If you are hosting an event or meeting, seeking coalition partners, or organizing an advocacy campaign and need to get the word out, share your information with streeter@forbesfunds.org. Please share your activities with us so we can help you amplify your work!
- Our [Health Care Advocacy Section](#) contains the latest activities regarding health care advocacy.
- The American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania has joined GNP and is available to assist nonprofits on civil liberties issues. Click [here](#) to learn about their resources.
- The Congressional Management Foundation issued its latest report on advocacy best practices for Congress. Click [here](#) to learn more.

[The Forbes Funds and GNP News and Announcements](#)

- The UpPrize has announced the 10 finalists in this year's social innovation challenge. Click [here](#) to learn more.
- March 28: Nonprofit Talent, The Forbes Funds, and Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania present, "Lessons in Social Impact Investing With Tony Wells, President And Co-Founder Of The Wells Foundation."
- GNP is pleased to offer you a growing array of exclusive member services and discounts from our corporate sponsors! Click [here](#) to view the list of services.
- PublicSource is offering a special GNP member discount code for its upcoming event with *Hillbilly Elegy* author J.D. Vance.
- Foundation of HOPE is our February Member Spotlight!

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- February 23: Transportation for America Webinar: Preparing for the Threat to Federal Transit Funding.
- February 23 Nonprofit Vote Webinar: Plan Ahead 2017, Part 2: Nonpartisan Voter Engagement Tactics.
- The Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program is accepting applications until March 1.
- The Conservation Partnerships grant application period is open until April 12.

[Pennsylvania Budget](#)

- *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported that the uncertainty regarding the Affordable Care Act has made it difficult for the Governor and legislators to craft this year's state budget.
- The Wolf Administration provided additional information about its plan to consolidate departments into the new Department of Health and Human Services.
- *The Times Tribune* reported that the Governor's budget seeks to convert several tax credits -- including the Educational Improvement Tax Credit and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit -- into block grants.
- CNHI reported on the current challenges to expanding gambling in order to fund the budget.
- The McKinsey report on government reform that informed Governor Tom Wolf's budget is now available to the public.
- *Pittsburgh City Paper* reported on the Governor's proposal to fund the state police with funds outside of Act 89's transportation fund.
- A new report from Moody's warned that local governments are being hurt by the decline in impact fees from natural gas extraction.

[Legislation](#)

The following bills were introduced since our last update:

- HB 449- Amending the Mental Health Procedures Act
- HB 452- Removing the Word "Recent" from the Definition of Child Abuse
- HB 452- Legislation Requiring Purely Public Charities to Spend Certain Percentages of Their Expenses on Their Program Services
- HB 471- Blighted Property
- HB 474- Filial Obligations, Title 23
- HB 476- Establishing a Commission to Study the Impact of Repealing the Affordable Care Act
- HB 478- Outpatient Psychiatric Clinics
- HB 495- Reintroducing Aging in Place Tax Credits
- HB 496- Livable Home Tax Credit
- HB 498- ANGEL Act
- SB 340- Abandoned Property Tax Sale Act
- SB 368- Prohibiting the Use of EBT Cards to Purchase Tobacco

[Federal Policy](#)

- Secretary of the Office of Management and Budget nominee Mick Mulvaney is advancing through the nomination process and is expected to be confirmed today.
- David Shulkin was confirmed by the Senate to head the Department of Veterans Affairs. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported that he has professional ties to the Pittsburgh region.
- Andy Pudzer withdrew from the confirmation process to serve as Secretary of Labor.
- Representative Luke Messer (R-IN) urged the Trump Administration to prevent undocumented immigrants from claiming a number of tax credits, including the child tax credit.

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- Pittsburgh officials are concerned that the Trump Administration's housing policies could impact Pittsburgh's efforts to construct affordable housing units.

Health Care

- *The New York Times* published a feature piece on the effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act.
- *The Washington Post* reported that divisions among Republicans may prevent them from meeting their March deadline of repealing the Affordable Care Act.
- The School Superintendents Association issued a report showing that proposals to reform Medicaid could hurt low-income students.

Pittsburgh Region News

- Local media reported on recent Immigrations and Customs Enforcement actions in Pittsburgh targeted at undocumented immigrants, as well as reactions from immigration advocates.
- The POISE Foundation published a new report that analyzes the challenges Pittsburgh faces with recruiting and retaining African-American young professionals.
- The Incline published its latest "Who's Next" list highlighting 20 community leaders and activists.
- PublicSource published an informational website on how Pittsburgh City Council members disburse their block grant funds.

Health and Human Services

- House Majority Policy Committee chair Kerry Benninghoff (R-Centre) and Representative Bud Cook (R-Washington) convened a public hearing on the opioid epidemic in Donora.
- The Department of Human Services received a new technical assistance grant to improve early childhood mental health services.
- Washington County Children and Youth Services workers agreed on a new contract with the county. The County Commissioners are expected to approve the contract today.

Education

- Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA) published an op-ed in *The Patriot-News* explaining his vote to confirm Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education.
- Pittsburgh Public Schools Superintendent Anthony Hamlet reiterated that implementing a "community schools" approach to improve access to social services is one of his top priorities.
- Next Pittsburgh profiled Mined Minds, which is providing new technical training to former coal miners.

Housing and Community Development

- Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto issued five executive orders as part of his effort to increase affordable housing in the city.
- *The Observer-Reporter* profiled the work of the Mon Valley Initiative.
- *The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* reported on the redevelopment hopes for New Kensington because of Penn State's new facility located in its business district.

Water, Energy, and Environment

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- *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported on lead contamination in Pittsburgh's soil.
- State Impact reported on the potential ramifications of Congress repealing the Obama Administration's Stream Protection Rule.

[Corrections and Public Safety](#)

- The Pittsburgh Foundation released "A Qualitative Study of Youth and the Juvenile Justice System" as part of its 100% Pittsburgh initiative.

[Arts, Parks, and Culture](#)

- The Heinz History Center has partnered with Google to post presidential artifacts into Google's Arts and Culture Platform.
- The Kingsley Association and Citiparks announced a new partnership to open up the Association's swimming pool to certain swimmers participating in Citiparks' programs.
- Next Pittsburgh highlighted City of Asylum's newly renovated facilities.

These stories, and many others, follow below.

Sections

[GNPN and The Forbes Funds Events](#)

* [February 21: Working Smarter Means Big Savings](#)

* [March 28: Good Ideas Forum: Lessons in Social Impact Investing With Tony Wells, President And Co-Founder Of The Wells Foundation](#)

* [2017 GNPN Public Policy Committee Meeting Dates](#)

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[Constituent and Town Hall Events](#)

February 21: Working Smarter Means Big Savings

Please Join Us for a Special GPNP Member Education Event:

Working Smarter Means Big Savings

Learn how to increase your efficiency while reducing costs!

As an executive, you know that in today's volatile market, efficiency and effective cash flow management are essential for nonprofit organizations. The expectation is to provide more and more services while keeping administrative costs down. An easy way to reduce administrative costs is to get the most out of the current tools you use to create and distribute documents and information within your organization.

The Wilson Group and their nonprofit partners have designed a session for executives and office managers alike to show how making small changes now to your current workflow will yield big savings on time and money over the long term. You'll learn how to get the most out of your current technology to work smarter and save money.

Who should attend:

Executives * Operations Managers * Office Administrators
IT Administrators * Finance Staff * Procurement Staff

**** All Attendees Will Be Entered to Win Special Prizes ****

Tuesday, February 21, 2016

9:00 AM to 10:30 AM

The Forbes Funds and GPNP Office
5 PPG Place, 2nd Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

[register](#)



March 28: Good Ideas Forum: Lessons in Social Impact Investing With Tony Wells, President And Co-Founder Of The Wells Foundation



LESSONS IN SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTING WITH TONY WELLS, PRESIDENT AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE WELLS FOUNDATION

Presented by Nonprofit Talent, Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania, and The Forbes Funds

Date: Tuesday, March 28th, 2017

Time: 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Location: Point Park University Ballroom downtown Pittsburgh

Cost: \$20 per person/delicious breakfast and beverages provided

This engaging session is designed for funders, investors, and nonprofits seeking to learn more about capital, financing strategies, and approaches to achieve greater social impact.

The Wells Foundation is a Columbus-based private family foundation created by Dana and Tony Wells. Pursuant to its mission, the foundation has a history of investing into social enterprises, developing new social innovation models, and advising local nonprofit organizations that are considering social enterprise since 2001. Tony is one of the most creative, and sought-after national speakers on the topic of Social Impact Investing, sharing his own stories, successes and lessons learned after taking the risk to make nearly ALL of his foundation's endowment available for impact in the nonprofit sector.

[register](#)

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2017 Public Policy Committee Meeting Dates

GPNP's Public Policy Committee will convene on:

- [Tuesday, April 11, 2017](#)
- [Tuesday, May 30, 2017](#)
- [Tuesday, August 8, 2017](#)
- [Tuesday, November 14, 2017](#)

The meetings will be held from 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM at The Forbes Funds/GPNP offices located at 5 PPG Place, 2nd Floor, Pittsburgh, PA, 15222. Conference lines will be available for those who cannot attend in person. You can register for the meetings by clicking the meeting dates above.

The Forbes Funds and GPNP News

["10 Finalists named in UpPrize Social Innovation Challenge." Amanda Waltz. Next Pittsburgh. February 16, 2017.](#)

"The second UpPrize challenge focuses on two key areas: Impactful Technology and Healthy Food Access. The finalists were selected from a field of 175 applicants by the challenge partners, BNY Mellon Foundation of Southwestern Pennsylvania, Bridgeway Capital and Comcast. And the finalists are...

Representing the Impactful Technology category:

- BlastPoint, a company that uses technology to unlock big data insights for everyone, a luxury typically reserved for organizations with resources
- Community Data Roundtable's Parent Portal, which allows caregivers to access their child's medical information directly
- Expil, Inc., a novel self-organizing platform that delivers on-demand and personalized education for free
- HiberSense, a former Blast Furnace cohort that uses a self-learning thermostat system to save up to 40 percent of HVAC costs and increases comfort for individuals
- Rubitection, a CMU spinout company that developed a medical device designed to prevent pressure ulcers, more familiarly known as bedsores.

Representing the Health Food Access category:

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- 412 Food Rescue's Good Food Project, which transforms fresh, healthy rescued food into affordable prepared meals
- South Clairton Corner Store Project, a brick-and-mortar store aimed at eliminating food insecurity in Clairton
- Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers of Pittsburgh Co-op (BUGFPC), a farming collective that addresses food insecurity in Homewood and Uptown
- Knead Community Cafe, a New Kensington asset that's set to become the first pay-what-you-can café in Pittsburgh
- Bible Center Church's Oasis Project, an organization that trains Homewood youth in urban farming through the launch of the Oasis Farm and Fishery"

["Finalists named in \\$1M UpPrize social innovation challenge." Natasha Lindstrom. *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. February 15, 2017.](#)

"Ten proposals seeking to improve the lives of greater Pittsburgh's most vulnerable people through food access or technology just clinched \$10,000 apiece in prize money in the second annual UpPrize social innovation challenge."

[Exclusive Services for GNPN Members](#)

GNPN is pleased to offer you a growing array of exclusive member services and discounts from our corporate sponsors! Services and discounts are currently available from:

- * **Association of Fundraising Professionals Western Pennsylvania Chapter**
- * **Bookminders**
- * **Multiscope**
- * **The Wilson Group**
- * **Your CFO**

Click [here](#) to view our current offering of services for GNPN Members!

[Foundation of Hope Member Spotlight!](#)

Foundation of HOPE is our Member Spotlight for February! The mission of the Foundation of HOPE is to empower incarcerated and released individuals to restore their relationship with their God, rebuild their lives, and reconcile to their communities. Thanks to its long-term, committed partnership with the Allegheny County Jail (ACJ), HOPE successfully carries out its mission through a three-tiered continuum of care for jail inmates and ex-offenders that includes Chaplaincy; a Pre-Release Program; and an Aftercare Program. Click [here](#) to read about their important work!

[Special GNPN Discount for Event with Hillbilly Elegy Author J.D. Vance](#)

PublicSource is bringing the author of the #1 New York Times bestselling book *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* to Pittsburgh for an evening lecture on Thursday, March 30, 2017. The event will begin at 7 p.m. at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Lecture Hall. Purchase [your tickets](#) now using the code GNPN for a 25% discount!

Announcements

["Report - Citizen-Centric Advocacy: The Untapped Power of Constituent Engagement."](#) [Congressional Management Foundation. February 13, 2017.](#)

"Citizen-Centric Advocacy: The Untapped Power of Constituent Engagement," reveals the degree of influence that citizens have on congressional decision-making. The report is the most comprehensive research ever published on citizen engagement with Congress. The research answers critical questions for citizen-advocates and lobbyists, including the following: How influential are constituent meetings compared to lobbyist meetings? What is the most effective way to communicate with a lawmaker (letter, email, phone call)? Which methods/strategies are most successful for building long-term relationships with Congress? The findings are based on nine surveys of congressional staff, comprising nearly 1,200 responses provided to CMF from 2004-2015. The research also includes a new case study with food bank representatives (part of the Feeding America network) and how they utilized advanced citizen-advocacy techniques to build relationships with their legislators."

[February 23: Transportation for America Webinar: Preparing for the Threat to Federal Transit Funding](#)

"Based on what's already been reported and what we're hearing, funding for public transportation will almost certainly be threatened this spring during the budget process. The Trump Administration has clearly stated their intent to increase spending on the military and make sizable cuts to non-defense spending - including transportation. On this webinar we'll be covering the threats to the program, what's at stake with the range of potential cuts, and what we can - and should - be ready to do together to fight it. Click [here](#) to learn more.

[February 23 Nonprofit Vote Webinar: Plan Ahead 2017, Part 2: Nonpartisan Voter Engagement Tactics](#)

Join us on Thursday, February 23rd for a free, hour long webinar surveying nonpartisan voter engagement tactics for nonprofits. In the first part of our "Plan Ahead 2017" two-parter we discussed planning your activities. In this second webinar, we will focus on the variety of nonpartisan voter engagement activities available to nonprofits: voter registration, voter education, Get-Out-The-Vote, ballot measure advocacy, working with candidates, and more. Click [here](#) to learn more.

[Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program Open Until March 1](#)

From Senator Wayne Fontana: "The [Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission \(PHMC\)](#) is now accepting applications from non-profits and local governments for the Keystone Historic Preservation Grant Program. Grants support projects that identify, preserve, promote and protect historic and archaeological resources in Pennsylvania for both the benefit of the public and community revitalization. Two categories of grants - project and construction - are available for historic resources in Pennsylvania listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places. Applicants may apply for only one type of grant. Project grants are available for planning and development initiatives that enhance historic preservation in communities. Project grant applications may include municipal planning initiatives focusing on historic resources or may be used to meet building- or project-specific planning goals. Keystone Historic Preservation Project Grants are available between \$5,000 and \$25,000 and require a 50/50 cash match. Construction grants are available for rehabilitation, preservation and restoration activities for historic resources that are publicly accessible and under non-profit or local government ownership. Keystone Historic

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Preservation Construction Grants are available between \$5,000 and \$100,000 and require a 50/50 cash match. A total of \$1.5 million has been set aside for this program and the application deadline is March 1. Grants will be awarded through a competitive selection process and are contingent on availability of funds. Applicants are required to use the web-based electronic grant application process. For more information, including grant program guidelines, please visit the PHMC online at www.phmc.pa.gov."

[Conservation Partnerships Grant Application Period Open Until April 12](#)

From Senator Elder Vogel: "The state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) is now accepting applications for grants under the 2017 Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2). The C2P2 program has funded thousands of projects that have helped plan, acquire, and develop parks, recreation facilities, and trails as well as conserve watersheds throughout the Commonwealth. Most grants require at least a 50% match. For more information, [please contact your regional advisor](#). The application period for C2P2 grants is open until April 12. [Click here for more information and to apply](#)."

Health Care Advocacy

Many GNPN members are concerned about the anticipated changes to the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP. If your organization is conducting activities, please share them with streeter@forbesfunds.org so they can be included in this section. Below are announcements from GNPN members:

From Allies for Children:

Proposals to block grant Medicaid could undermine the key components of the program including: the guarantee of coverage for eligible children, the ability for children to have all the care they need covered, and the ability for families to get care for children at an affordable cost. We are looking to have a better understanding of how organizations benefit from Medicaid as well as the economic impacts of the Medicaid program. If you are able or willing to share stories related to clients who benefit from Medicaid or CHIP, please contact Heather Hopson, communications director, at heather.hopson@alliesforchildren.org.

From the Consumer Health Coalition:

The Consumer Health Coalition (CHC) is looking for volunteers to share their personal health insurance stories. Click [here](#) to download information. Additionally, the Consumer Health Coalition has published "Cover Me" resources for organizations and individuals mobilizing around health care. Click [here](#) and [here](#) to download them.

From the PA Health Access Network and Insure PA:

Join a statewide movement to protect all Pennsylvanians' access to affordable, high-quality healthcare coverage, preserve life-saving consumer protections, and ensure Medicare, CHIP, and Medicaid remain available for those who need them. Click [here](#) to learn more.

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Resources from the ACLU

The American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania has joined GNPN and is available to assist nonprofits on civil liberties issues. In particular, the ACLU offers a number of "Know Your Rights" guides available [here](#) along with its Speakers' Bureau.

The ACLU often provides speakers for educational events, panels, conferences, and school programs. It has an active speakers' bureau consisting of attorneys, community leaders, ACLU-PA staff, and board members who are well versed in a variety of civil liberties topics, including (but not limited to):

- Free speech
- Immigrants' rights
- LGBT rights
- Police practices
- Religious liberty
- Reproductive freedom
- Security & civil liberties
- Student & youth rights
- Voting rights

Click [here](#) for more information.

Pennsylvania Budget

["Uncertainty over Obamacare's future makes it harder to plan Pennsylvania's budget." Kate Giammarise. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. February 13, 2017.](#)

"Congressional Republicans' lack of a clear plan on how to best replace the Affordable Care Act has everyone from health insurance companies to hospitals to those who gained insurance coverage under Obamacare uncertain about what the future holds. Add legislators and policymakers in Pennsylvania who are in the process of working on the state budget to the list of those who want answers."

["A closer look at Gov. Wolf's consolidation plan for health and human services." Harold Brubaker. *Philadelphia Inquirer*. February 10, 2017.](#)

"Gov. Wolf's proposed 2017-18 budget says the consolidation of four departments into a new Health and Human Services Department 'will drive better outcomes, improve customer service, and save more than \$90 million.' Yet most of the projected savings detailed this week by the administration have nothing to do with anticipated efficiencies from bringing the Human Services, Health, Aging, and Drug and Alcohol Departments under the umbrella of the new department. Instead, the planned cuts are from actions that the individual departments could take on their own.

["State tax credits in budget crosshairs." Robert Swift. *The Times Tribune*. February 13, 2017.](#)

"A cost-savings proposal in the governor's budget for fiscal 2017-18 would convert an array of state tax credits into a block grant. That would enable Wolf Cabinet officials to give priority to those tax

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credits providing the greatest opportunities for business investment, education access and community development. The state revenue available to support these tax credits would be reduced by \$100 million next year from a current level of nearly \$500 million if lawmakers adopt the proposal. Department secretaries also would give priority to funding tax credits based in part on their performance in meeting goals and the demand for them, said state Budget Secretary Randy Albright."

["Appetite grows for online gaming, as questions linger." John Finnerty. CNHI. February 15, 2017.](#)

" Gaming proponents are renewing a push to legalize online betting, sensing opportunity as the governor and lawmakers look to raise cash while avoiding tax hikes. Their efforts come despite the state's poor record of over-estimating the amount of money it can make from gaming, which has some lawmakers urging caution. Gov. Tom Wolf's budget proposal, released last week, projects \$150 million in revenue from new gambling operations, though it doesn't specify what those are. Online gambling, run by existing casinos, seems to be the top choice, according to lawmakers contacted for this story. But complicating matters are concerns that the federal government could soon close the door on online gambling."

[Report: "Achieving a sustainable budget for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania." McKinsey. February 2017.](#)

["Why a small item in Gov. Wolf's budget proposal is a big deal for Pennsylvania public transit." Ryan Deto. Pittsburgh City Paper. February 15, 2017.](#)

"For the past several years, a growing chunk of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's public-transit fund, known as Act 89, has been siphoned off to pay for an increasing number of Pennsylvania State Police troopers. Last year, state legislators responded by passing a rule limiting PennDOT's allocation for state police, and mandated that allocation shrink by 4 percent each year until it's reduced to \$500 million. But Gov. Wolf is going even further and is proposing moving the state-police funding out of Act 89 entirely. In his 2017-2018 budget, Wolf wants to fund the troopers through a \$25-per-person fee, for towns that rely solely on the service of state police, instead of taking money from Act 89."

["Local governments hurt by declining impact fees, says Moody's." Liz Reid. State Impact. February 10, 2017.](#)

"Declining impact fee revenue from Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale natural gas industry is hurting many local governments' budgets, according to [a new report](#) from Moody's Investors Service."

[Commentary: "Will Republicans buy into 'We did that' and work with Wolf on his budget?" Tony May. The Patriot-News. February 14, 2017.](#)

Additional State Government News

["Repercussions from layoff of 500 at Pa. unemployment centers continue to spread." Katie Colinari. Newsworks. February 14, 2017.](#)

"On Dec. 19, 2016, more than 500 state workers were furloughed as a result of a partisan funding spat between Gov. Tom Wolf and the state Senate. The lack of staff has meant hours-long

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telephone hold times and busy signals for those seeking unemployment benefits. It's also meant long waits for employers and unemployed workers like Flynn looking to appeal claims."

["Lawmaker urges Wolf to modernize campaign finance website." Marie Cusick. State Impact. February 13, 2017.](#)

"Rep. Greg Vitali (D- Delaware) says updating the site would go a long way toward transparency. Vitali recently [published a report](#) on the natural gas industry, showing what he describes as its outsized political influence in Harrisburg. He blames the lobbying expenditures and campaign contributions for stymieing efforts to enact a gas severance tax and new drilling regulations. He estimates the gas industry spent more than \$7 million last year on lobbying and over \$62 million since 2007."

Pennsylvania Legislation

Below are key bills introduced or voted on since our last update. If there is a bill relevant to your mission that you do not see listed, please email streeter@forbesfunds.org so we can add it to our tracking list.

New Legislation

[HB 449- Amending the Mental Health Procedures Act](#)

Prime Sponsor: Representative Tom Murt (R-Montgomery, Philadelphia)

Current Committee: Judiciary

"... legislation amending the Mental Health Procedures Act to remove the 30 day standard for determining that a person presents a clear and present danger to himself or others." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

[HB 452- Removing the Word "Recent" from the Definition of Child Abuse](#)

Prime Sponsor: Representative Tom Murt (R-Montgomery, Philadelphia)

Current Committee: Judiciary

"... legislation amending Title 23, the Domestic Relations Statute, to remove the word 'recent' from the definition of child abuse. This would allow for acts of child abuse, no matter how long ago they occurred, to be recognized as such." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

[HB 452- Legislation Requiring Purely Public Charities to Spend Certain Percentages of Their Expenses on Their Program Services](#)

Prime Sponsor: Representative Tony DeLuca (D-Allegheny)

Current Committee: Finance

"...amending Act 55 (The Institutions of Purely Public Charities Act) to require charities seeking to enjoy the Sales and Use Tax exemption provided to charities in this commonwealth to expend at least 60 percent of their functional expenses on the charity's program expenses." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

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[HB 471- Blighted Property](#)

Prime Sponsor: Representative Tony DeLuca (D-Allegheny)

Current Committee: Urban Affairs

"Act 90 contained a major flaw; it treats mortgage lenders that have taken possession of a property, following a foreclosure, differently than it treats other owners." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

Classifies mortgage lenders as property owners.

[HB 474- Filial Obligations, Title 23](#)

Prime Sponsor: Representative Tony DeLuca (D-Allegheny)

Current Committee: Judiciary

"This legislation removes the requirement of financial obligation for family members for the care of indigent parents." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

[HB 476- Establishing a Commission to Study the Impact of Repealing the Affordable Care Act](#)

Prime Sponsor: Representative Dan Frankel (D-Allegheny)

Current Committee: Health

"...legislation establishing a commission to study the impact of federal repeal of the Affordable Care Act on Pennsylvania residents." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

[HB 478- Outpatient Psychiatric Clinics](#)

Prime Sponsor: Representative Tina Pickett (R-Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna)

Current Committee: Health

"My legislation will help outpatient psychiatric clinics to meet the growing demand and address the shortage of psychiatric time we are facing in Pennsylvania by changing the number of hours of psychiatric supervision required for each staff member per week. The legislation will allow licensed prescribing professionals to work within their scope of practice as is the case in the physical health care arena." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

[HB 495- Reintroducing Aging in Place Tax Credits](#)

Prime Sponsor: Representative Michael Schlossberg (D-Lehigh)

Current Committee: Finance

"The first proposal would establish the Caregiver Tax Credit. The tax credit would allow taxpayers who qualify for the federal dependent care credit to apply for a tax credit against their state income tax liability." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

[HB 496- Livable Home Tax Credit](#)

Prime Sponsor: Representative Michael Schlossberg (D-Lehigh)

Current Committee: Finance

"The tax credit would allow taxpayers renovating or constructing a home in order to improve accessibility and provide universal visitability." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

[HB 498- ANGEL Act](#)

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Prime Sponsor: Representative Tina Davis (D-Bucks)

Current Committee: Judiciary

"... authorizing police departments to establish and administer an ANGEL program aimed at assisting individuals in identifying and receiving treatment for opiate addiction." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

[SB 340- Abandoned Property Tax Sale Act](#)

Prime Sponsor: Senator Pat Browne (R-Lehigh)

Current Committee: Urban Affairs and Housing

"This legislation would provide for the tax sale of abandoned properties. Specifically, this bill requires tax sale purchasers of blighted properties to enter into redevelopment agreements with the local municipality or redevelopment authority so that the properties can be put back into productive use to benefit the community rather than be a drain on it." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

[SB 368- Prohibiting the Use of EBT Cards to Purchase Tobacco](#)

Prime Sponsor: Senator Michele Brooks (R-Crawford, Erie, Mercer, Warren)

Current Committee: Health and Human Services

"Currently, an individual who is receiving public assistance funds may use an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to purchase tobacco and tobacco products at various locations throughout the state. This legislation would prohibit the purchase of these items with an EBT card. The Human Services Code already prohibits the purchase of alcohol with EBT cards and my legislation would add all tobacco and tobacco products to the list of prohibitions." ([Cosponsor Memo](#))

Federal Policy

["Trump's budget pick clears initial Senate hurdle." AP. February 16, 2017.](#)

"The Senate voted 52-48 along party lines to advance Mulvaney to a final, up-or-down vote Thursday, where the outcome no longer appears to be in doubt after another senior Republican grudgingly announced his support."

["Shulkin unanimously confirmed to head Veterans Affairs." Lisa Rein. *The Washington Post*. February 13, 2017.](#)

"David J. Shulkin, an internist and longtime health administrator, was unanimously confirmed Monday to lead the troubled Veterans Affairs Department, becoming the first of President Trump's Cabinet picks to be embraced by all Republicans and Democrats. He is the sole holdover from the Obama administration. No senators dissented on Shulkin's nomination in a rare show of bipartisanship following contentious battles over other Trump Cabinet selections. Shulkin's approval makes him the 11th high-ranking Trump official to be confirmed by the Senate."

["Trump's new VA chief, lone holdover from Obama administration, has Pittsburgh ties." Tracie Mauriello. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. February 16, 2017.](#)

"The country's new veterans' affairs chief got his start in Pittsburgh, and his early views on controlling healthcare costs were shaped by his research into operating expenditures at 70 hospitals in Western Pennsylvania."

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["Puzder withdraws nomination for Labor secretary." Lydia Wheeler. *The Hill*. February 15, 2017.](#)

"Andy Puzder on Wednesday withdrew his nomination to become President Trump's secretary of Labor after it became apparent that he would not have enough Republican support to be confirmed."

["GOP rep urges Trump to prevent illegal immigrants from claiming tax credits." Naomi Jagoda. *The Hill*. February 13, 2017.](#)

Rep. Luke Messer (R-Ind.) is urging President Trump to take actions to prevent immigrants in the country illegally from claiming the child tax credit. 'Most Americans are astonished to learn that each year billions of taxpayer dollars are given out to people who are in our country illegally,' Messer said in a news release. ... The request from Messer - a member of the House GOP leadership team who is eyeing a Senate run in 2018 - comes as Trump has made tax reform and curbing illegal immigration two of his top priorities. Trump has already issued executive orders to direct federal agencies to start work on a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border and to strengthen immigration enforcement."

["Trump policies could threaten Pittsburgh's low-income housing efforts." Mark Belko. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. February 14, 2017.](#)

"Kevin Acklin, Mayor Bill Peduto's chief of staff and Urban Redevelopment Authority board chairman, said reductions in the low-income housing tax credit market could undermine plans to create thousands of affordable rental units in the city, including those at the former Civic Arena site."

[Commentary: "Cost of limiting charitable tax deduction higher than you think." Marques Chavez. *The Hill*. February 7, 2017.](#)

[Commentary: "Perspectives on the Johnson Amendment." Chuck McLean. Guidestar. February 9, 2017.](#)

Health Care

["Will Obamacare Really Go Under the Knife?" Robert Draper. *The New York Times*. February 14, 2017.](#)

"Republicans spent almost seven years waging a battle to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Finally, they are set up for victory - or a new kind of disappointment."

["Angry Town Hall Meetings on Health Care Law, and Few Answers." Thomas Kaplan. *The New York Times*. February 13, 2017.](#)

["Ryan faces major test in selling Obamacare repeal and replacement." *The Washington Post*. February 14, 2017.](#)

"House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) spent Tuesday on a door-to-door tour of the Capitol in hopes of salvaging his plan to repeal and largely replace the Affordable Care Act by spring. The day-long blitz comes as Republicans in Congress have made virtually no visible progress in recent weeks on overhauling the health-care system, according to interviews with several senior GOP aides. That is largely because the party remains sharply divided over how much of the ACA should

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be repealed and how much - if any of it - should be replaced. The stalemate has lawmakers questioning whether the law known as Obamacare can be effectively gutted by Ryan's self-imposed deadline of the end of March."

["School district chiefs: Proposed Medicaid changes would hurt poor children and students with disabilities." Valerie Strauss. *The Washington Post*. February 9, 2017.](#)

"A new survey of school district leaders across the country finds that they are deeply worried that Republican proposals to refinance Medicaid, if they become law, would hurt students who live in poverty and those with disabilities and in special education. A big cut in Medicaid spending would mean, the survey report said, that many districts would have to furlough or lay off school personnel, that the percentage of uninsured children could go from 12 percent to an estimated 21 percent or higher, and critical benefits could be eliminated. Furthermore, new local tax levies or requests for higher taxes could result in an effort to make up for lost funding to special education programs and health services for students in poverty. Nearly 40 percent of children in the United States receive their health care through Medicaid, according to AASA, the School Superintendents Association which did the survey, titled "[In Cutting Medicaid: A Prescription to Hurt the Neediest Kids.](#)" It was administered by the AASA as well as the Association of School Business Officials International and the Association of Educational Services Agencies."

[Analysis: "Trump Administration's New Health Rule Would Reduce Tax Credits, Raise Costs, For Millions of Moderate-Income Families." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. February 15, 2017.](#)

Elections 2017 and 2018

["Western Pa. representative will challenge Bob Casey." Jonathan Tamari. *Philadelphia Inquirer*. February 10, 2017.](#)

"State Rep. Rick Saccone of Allegheny County has filed federal paperwork to run against the Democratic senator next year and is planning to start his campaign on Feb. 27 in Harrisburg."

["Three judicial seats -- including one to replace District Judge William Livingston, to be on ballot this year." Tom Davidson. *The Times*. February 15, 2017. \(Subscription Required\)](#)

[Commentary: "Do voter identification laws suppress minority voting? Yes. We did the research." Zoltan L. Hajnal, Nazita Lajevardi, and Lindsay Nielson. *The Washington Post*. February 15, 2017.](#)

Pittsburgh Region News

["Some Pa. cities helping communities when immigration raids happen." Margaret Krauss. WESA. February 16, 2017.](#)

"Pennsylvania wasn't among the states where large-scale immigration enforcement took place last week, but communities in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have reported raids."

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["Immigrants, their advocates wary of recent ICE actions in Pittsburgh." Molly Born. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. February 14, 2017.](#)

"An ICE official said Tuesday that there's been no uptick in enforcement actions, sweeps or raids in the Pittsburgh area. But immigration attorneys noted that the agency appears to be enforcing an existing part of the law that some ICE officers had previously disregarded at their discretion."

["Report examines challenges Pittsburgh faces in attracting, retaining young black professionals." Gary Rotstein. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. February 16, 2017.](#)

"The new report - a collaboration between the Poise Foundation and a volunteer group, African-American Neighborhoods of Choice - focused on the city of Pittsburgh rather than the broader region in outlining a series of challenges: long-term decline in the black population; lack of solid middle-class neighborhoods in which blacks are numerous; a dearth of cultural events and dining establishments with appeal to prosperous blacks; a sense that blacks are still viewed negatively by many in the general population and held back from business opportunities. Prepared by the University of Pittsburgh's University Center for Social and Urban Research, the report combines census data, neighborhood information, focus groups and surveys. The speakers presenting it Wednesday said it contained nothing "shocking" but serves as a good baseline for grassroots efforts to create a better environment for blacks who have aspirations locally, including those coming from elsewhere to attend college in Pittsburgh."

["Who's Next: Community Leaders and Activists; 20 people building a better Pittsburgh." The Incline. February 13, 2017.](#)

"Community leadership is not a glamorous job. Most of the time, these leaders and activists work as unseen hands guiding Pittsburgh toward a better future. For our third Who's Next class, we honored the top up-and-comers in this field. They're working to ensure that the city's fastest-growing neighborhoods stay affordable; to support refugees and immigrants; to empower everyone from high school students in underserved communities to incarcerated persons looking for work; and much more."

["How does Pittsburgh City Council spend block grants?" Dale Shoemaker. PublicSource. February 9, 2017.](#)

"Click on your Pittsburgh City Council representative below to see how they plan to spend their block grants in 2017. Each council member gets \$75,000 to spend; \$150,000 is saved for a city-wide fund. These allocations are subject to change throughout the year, and some council representatives haven't outlined how they plan to allocate their funds yet."

["'Activate and do something' for Pittsburgh at this social justice workshop." MJ Slaby. The Incline. February 16, 2017.](#)

"Cue the Social Justice Innovation Weekend that runs Friday to Sunday with pitch presentations Monday. The event focuses on social justice ideas in three areas - art, technology and faith. Repair the World partnered with other organizations to make it happen: The Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Fygment, AlphaLab Gear, Ascender, Work Hard Pgh, Innovation Works, AlphaLab, Muslim Center of Greater Pittsburgh and Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh Community Relations Council."

Health and Human Services

["State reps gather heroin testimony." Natalie Reid. *Observer-Reporter*. February 13, 2017.](#)

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"State Reps. Bud Cook, R-West Pike Run, and Kerry Benninghoff, R-Centre, chairman of the House Majority Policy Committee, brought the legislators together to hear testimony on the opioid epidemic and how it's affecting communities."

["Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Receives Technical Assistance Grant for Early Childhood Mental Health." Press Release. PADHS. February 10, 2017.](#)

"Department of Human Services Secretary Ted Dallas announced the department is a recipient of an Intensive Technical Assistance grant through the Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) as a tool for promoting mental health and school readiness. IECMHC improves children's lives by supporting their social, emotional, and behavioral health and development."

["County, CYS employees arrive at new contract." Observer-Reporter. February 15, 2017.](#)

"Six weeks after their previous contract expired, members of the union representing Washington County Children and Youth Services employees expect to see the county commissioners approve a new, three-year pact Thursday morning."

["Study shows poor children face higher rates of asthma and ADHD." David Templeton. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. February 13, 2017.](#)

"Poverty takes a toll on human health and especially on children. The American Academy of Pediatrics and Britain's Child Poverty Action Group, among various groups and scientific studies, long have documented the higher risk of illness, chronic disease and disability among impoverished children, along with lower birth weights and an average life expectancy nearly a decade shorter than children from affluent families. Now add asthma and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder to the long list of physical and mental maladies, along with attendant conditions known as "comorbidities." These are the key findings of a Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC study published today in Pediatrics."

[Analysis: "Poverty Reduction Programs Help Adults Lacking College Degrees the Most." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. February 16, 2017.](#)

Education

["Pittsburgh Public Schools chief eyes better social services for students, families." Molly Born. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. February 13, 2017.](#)

"The concept of using school buildings to house social services for students and their families, long studied in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, is moving closer to reality. Superintendent Anthony Hamlet has called implementing 'community schools' in the district one of his top priorities, and it's among the short-term goals the school board set for him."

["Mined Minds turns laid off coal miners into tech professionals." Amanda Waltz. Next Pittsburgh. February 10, 2017.](#)

"... Mined Minds, a bootcamp-style training program that teaches software developing to former miners and other unemployed workers. What started out as a small class of 10 people coding in a volunteer fire hall has quickly grown into a nonprofit organization that serves mining communities in Western Pennsylvania, including those in the counties of Greene, Washington, Fayette and Allegheny, and in West Virginia. So far, Mined Minds has trained between 70 and 80 students, a

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number that includes a mix of miners and their family members, and people working in tangential industries that also suffer when mines go under. To expand their reach, Laucher and Graham partnered with the Community College of Allegheny County, Clarion University, and a TechHire funded class in Pittsburgh, as well as with rural high schools."

[Commentary: "My vote for Betsy DeVos was a vote for our children's future." Senator Pat Toomey \(R-PA\). *The Patriot-News*. February 16, 2017.](#)

Housing and Community Development

["Peduto Pushes For Affordable Housing With Five Executive Orders." Mark Nootbaar. *WESA*. February 16, 2017.](#)

"Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto is hoping to stabilize and grow affordable housing options in the city through a series of executive orders. The five orders range from helping individuals stay in their homes through promoting larger homestead exemptions and increased tenant protections, to encouraging developers to make affordable options a priority through tax incentives and improved zoning rules. Most of the provisions of the orders launch new internal efforts or call for agencies to simply refocus their efforts on affordability."

["Mon Valley Initiative charts growth in Charleroi, Monessen." Scott Beveridge. *Observer-Reporter*. February 14, 2017.](#)

"The initiative and CDCs in Charleroi and neighboring Monessen have made incredible strides in the municipalities in the past decade, he said."

["Developers hope entrepreneurial center will breathe new life into New Ken business district." Kim Leonard. *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. February 13, 2017.](#)

"Penn State is hoping an entrepreneurial center it plans to open in New Kensington's business district will breathe some new life into a five-block stretch of Fifth Avenue where vacant storefronts and empty lots abound."

["Wylie Holdings has cashed in on Lawrenceville's revitalization, but is it being a good neighbor?" Ryan Deto. *Pittsburgh City Paper*. February 15, 2017.](#)

"The process of buying a property cheaply, waiting and making no improvements, and then selling high is known as land speculation. Free-market proponents say it's the benefit of entering a risky market early; critics say the tactic can inhibit the equitable, community-minded development neighborhoods try to achieve. For Wylie, land speculation is just one part of a mixed real-estate portfolio. While Wylie's management team of Joe Edelstein and Ron King have been a force in helping Lawrenceville's Butler Street transform from grubby streetscape to Pittsburgh's hippest business district, their record as landlords has drawn strong criticism from tenants. And while Wylie has won more than 30 awards for preserving historic buildings, some community-oriented developers say Wylie's development tactics also help to spur gentrification and, at times, can hold properties hostage in the name of earning profits. Financially, Wylie has become wildly successful, cashing in on the rapidly changing housing market in Lawrenceville and beyond. But what does this mean for the neighborhoods it works in?"

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Water, Energy, and Environment

["Free testing for lead is offered for garden projects." Jill Daly. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. February 14, 2017.](#)

"Lead is often found where industry or heavy traffic has planted particles of the heavy metal. But it's also prevalent in sites where old homes have been demolished, where painted wood and lead pipe debris leave traces of lead - a health hazard, particularly for young children and pregnant women."

["Uptick in 'downstream' energy job openings provides hope that Western Pennsylvania's employment is improving." Stephen Huba. *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. February 11, 2017.](#)

"Despite a two-year downturn in the oil and gas industry, 'downstream' opportunities such as power plants and pipelines are feeding a growing sense that the employment outlook in Western Pennsylvania is improving. Available energy-related jobs run the gamut from truck drivers, who can earn a commercial driver's license in five weeks, to highly trained technicians, who may have to go back to school for a two-year degree, industry observers say."

["Former energy-industry employees turn to trucking as jobs continue to dwindle." Stephen Huba. *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. February 12, 2017.](#)

"Forty-six mining-related companies, including Halliburton, have laid off employees in the past two years, according to a release from Pennsylvania CareerLink. A U.S. Department of Labor program, funded through the Appalachian Regional Commission and individual states, provides retraining money for miners and those working in ancillary fields."

["Congress axed a rule to protect streams from coal pollution. Here's what that means for Pennsylvania." Reid Frazier. *State Impact*. February 14, 2017.](#)

"Among the first accomplishments of the new Congress was undoing a regulation barely one month old - the Department of Interior's Stream Protection Rule. The agency finalized the rule in December, in one of the Obama administration's final acts. But using a law called the Congressional Review Act, the new Congress quickly voted to take back the new rule, which would have made it harder for mining companies to bury or discharge mining waste in streams. Coal companies said the rule would have jeopardized their already struggling industry. But just how would it have affected mines? One clue can be found up a wooded ravine in Greene County."

["Tree-planting initiative to help 'revive the local landscape.'" Jake Flannick. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. February 10, 2017.](#)

"[Allegheny Watershed Alliance] is preparing to plant acres of trees along a number of streams in the region as part of a statewide initiative to improve the health of waterways.

Encompassing a handful of watersheds, the years-long project will involve planting some 2,000 native trees and shrubbery over a total of 10 acres. The greenery will enrich not only the scenery but also stream banks, serving as a buffer against pollutants and providing shade and new habitats for wildlife."

[Commentary: "Privatization is not the answer to PWSA's problems." Aly Shaw. *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. February 13, 2017.](#)

Corrections and Public Safety

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["Youth give a voice to Pittsburgh Foundation study on juvenile justice, poverty." Joyce Gannon. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. February 13, 2017.](#)

"Research abounds on the vast numbers of children and teens who land in the juvenile justice system. But for a new project on how to assist vulnerable youth who are caught up in crime, the Pittsburgh Foundation decided to go beyond statistics. Foundation researchers sat down with more than 50 teens and young adults who had direct experiences with the juvenile justice system and tried to dig deep into the circumstances that the youths believe led them to get into trouble. Their answers ranged from racial biases, peer pressure and sexual abuse to living in a 'bad neighborhood.'... The report being released today is the pilot study for the foundation's 100 Percent Pittsburgh - an initiative launched in 2015 to address the issues that contribute to significant portions of the region's population either living in or at being at risk of poverty. Two sectors of the population the foundation is targeting because of their particular risk factors for poverty are youth ages 12-24, and single women with children. As part of the 100 Percent project, the foundation said it will commit 60 percent of its unrestricted funds to programs that assist those groups impacted by poverty."

[Report: "A Qualitative Study of Youth and the Juvenile Justice System." The Pittsburgh Foundation. February 13, 2017.](#)

[Commentary: "Breaking the chains of a jail economy." Brian O'Neill. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. February 12, 2017.](#)

Arts, Parks, and Culture

["History Center partners with Google to exhibit presidential artifacts worldwide." Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. February 16, 2017.](#)

"'Presidents in Office,' a virtual exhibition on the Google Arts & Culture platform, features images of objects and archival materials depicting more than 150 years of presidential history with a Western Pennsylvania connection.

["Citiparks announces partnership with the Kingsley Association for swimming." New Pittsburgh Courier. February 10, 2017.](#)

"... Citiparks Pool Tag holders & those eligible for Citiparks free swimming with Recreation Cards will be able to utilize Kingsley Pool through 2017"

["City of Asylum @ Alphabet City opens its doors to the community." Brian Conway. Next Pittsburgh. February 13, 2017.](#)

"The ambitious mission of City of Asylum has a home to match with the newly-opened City of Asylum @ Alphabet City in the grand former Masonic Hall at 40 W. North Ave. on the North Side. The imposing structure, situated next door to the old Garden Theater and overlooking Allegheny Commons, has sat vacant since the mid-90s. Today, the building hosts a performance space, restaurant, bookstore, eight apartments and of course the headquarters for an organization whose mission is to provide sanctuary for exiled writers from around the world."

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Constituent and Town Hall Events

Below is a list of public and constituent events held by legislators.

If you know of an event not listed, please email streeter@forbesfunds.org

[Senator Camera Bartolotta \(R-Beaver, Greene, Washington\) Town Hall Event on Postpartum Depression](#)

When: March 2, 2017 at 12:00 PM

Where: Cameron Wellness Center, 240 Wellness Way, Washington, PA 15301

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