

STATE REP. PERRY STAMBAUGH

If you haven't already
done so, please sign up for
my weekly e-newsletter
"CAPITOL REPORT"
at RepPerryStambaugh.com/
Email-SignUp.

Always Ready to Serve the 86th District!

SUMMER 2025

PA Fiscal Woes Under Microscope in State Budget Talks



As has (unfortunately) become a Commonwealth tradition, the General Assembly once again failed to pass the bulk of the state budget by the statutory June 30 deadline. In fact, a completed PA budget has been adopted as required just eight times in the past 21 years.

As I'm writing this, a 2025–26 budget "spend" number has not yet been agreed to by legislative leaders and Gov. Josh Shapiro's administration. But no matter what figure is ultimately chosen, my concern over PA's financial health remains.

Our state operates with a structural deficit. The 2024–25 PA budget rolled in with a nearly \$1.5 billion shortfall, according to the state's Independent Fiscal Office (IFO). Now, the IFO projects 2025–26 General Fund revenues (with no changes in current law) will reach just \$47.02 billion — that will create a \$4.45 billion shortfall alone using the Governor's \$51.47 billion proposed budget blueprint.

To close the spending gap, the General Fund surplus — which stood at roughly \$8 billion in January 2023 when Gov. Shapiro took office — will continue to be siphoned and completely disappear by next year.

After that, by applying questionable budget gimmicks, the Governor and legislative leaders will (illegally, in my opinion) tap the \$7.38 billion Rainy Day Fund (which under law is to be used solely for emergencies and technically requires a two-thirds vote of both the House and Senate to access) to bring future budgets in balance. Once that occurs, our state savings account (currently equivalent to 56 days of spending) will be depleted by the end of the 2026-27 budget year.

What's left to do at that point? Raise taxes, of course!

PA has a spending problem. Over the past 25 years, PA's General Fund budget has ballooned 140 percent, compared to inflation climbing by 81 percent and population inching up by just 6 percent. When special "shadow budget" funds and federal monies are thrown in, PA spending has soared 212 percent since 2000 — more than double.

Sunday Hunting Expanded

Gov. Josh Shapiro in early July signed House Bill 1431 that allows the PA Game Commission to ease restrictions on Sunday hunting.

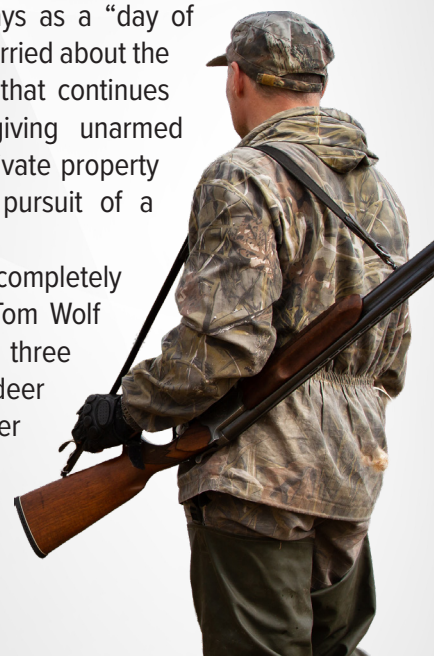
Very likely, not every Sunday will be open for hunting. Some estimates place as many as 26 Sundays — half — being so designated. Hopefully, the Game Commission will decide which Sundays to include after considering biological impacts and comments from groups that use state game lands for recreation (such as hikers, birdwatchers, and horseback riders who want Sundays reserved for non-hunting activities).

HB 1431 did include some toughening of PA's notoriously squishy trespass laws. A person who hunts private land on a Sunday must obtain written permission to use the property from the landowner, agent of the landowner, or the person who leases the land. Failure to obtain written permission becomes a third-degree summary offense — a fine of between \$250 and \$500. A second offense within seven years results in an ungraded misdemeanor with a one-year loss of hunting privileges and fines up to \$3,000 and six months in jail.

I voted against HB 1431 for several reasons, namely strong

opposition I heard from the agricultural community and landowners in Perry and Juniata counties concerned about the erosion of private property rights as well as the continued devaluation of Sundays as a "day of rest and reverence." I am also worried about the inclusion of muddled language that continues the "trespass loophole" by giving unarmed persons unfettered access to private property by simply claiming they're in pursuit of a "hunting dog."

Hunting on Sunday was completely banned until 2019, when Gov. Tom Wolf signed a bill to allow hunting on three Sundays — one during archery deer season, one during firearms deer season, and one selected by the Game Commission (which became the Sunday during firearms bear season).



Navigating the ‘Wild, Wild West’ of Collegiate Athletics

I have teamed with House Republican Leader Jesse Topper (R-Bedford/Fulton) on legislation to provide protections for student-athletes receiving compensation for the use of their name, image, and likeness (NIL).

A settlement in a class-action lawsuit, *House v. NCAA*, approved by a federal judge in June paves the way for schools to pay athletes directly for the first time. Key aspects include:

- Elimination of NCAA scholarship limits.
- Establishment of roster limits for each team.
- Creation of a groundbreaking, revenue-sharing framework that allows institutions to distribute earnings with student-athletes.
- A payment plan for former student-athletes from the last 10 years for use of NIL.
- Formation of a College Sports Commission (CSC), operating separately from the NCAA, to ensue enforcement and compliance with the new rules.

However, because no state legal structure on NIL or revenue-sharing exists, compensated student-athletes remain vulnerable to poor financial decisions and without recourse if they become injured or otherwise incapable of pursuing their athletic careers.

NIL and revenue-sharing have become among the most dynamic and evolving spaces in the national sports market. The bill I advanced with Leader Topper would ensure that student-



athletes receive the financial education necessary to protect their NIL or revenue-sharing assets while giving them the opportunity to save NIL or revenue-sharing earnings.

Helping protect student-athletes from financial harm or exploitation is a solid first step states should take. As NIL evolves, Pennsylvania will be following changes and enacting policies to ensure our colleges and universities can remain competitive in the changing sports landscape.

Box Turtle on Path to Becoming PA State Reptile

In April, the House Game & Fisheries Committee unanimously supported House Bill 401, legislation I authored designating the ubiquitous eastern box turtle (*Terrapene Carolina Carolina*) as the official Pennsylvania state reptile.

While I testified, staff from the PA Fish and Boat Commission brought a live eastern box turtle for committee members to observe.

The genesis for HB 401 came from first-grade students at Juniata Elementary School in Mifflintown who last May invited me to present a state flag as part of their study of state symbols. I was very impressed with how much the students knew about the Commonwealth's many wildlife species and products that have received "official" status, such as state animal (white-tailed deer) and bird (ruffed grouse).

A boy came up to me and asked, "Why doesn't PA have a state reptile?" He suggested the "yellow turtles" he sees in the summer — the eastern box turtle.



Eastern box turtles can be found across the Commonwealth in rural, suburban, and even urban habitats: shrubby grasslands, marshy meadows, open woodlands, and forest edges. Box turtles generally live for 25 to 35 years but can survive for more than a century.

Eastern box turtles have many uniquely identifying characteristics. When in danger, the turtle can close the hinged sections of its shell, effectively sealing its soft body in bone, forming a "box." When injured or damaged, the shell has the capacity to regenerate.

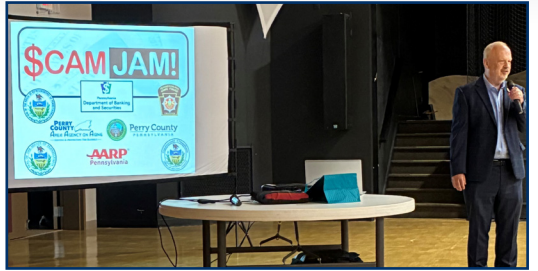
Unfortunately, the eastern box turtle has become an at-risk species, experiencing population declines due to habitat fragmentation, traffic mishaps, incidental and illegal collection, poor habitat management, as well as higher levels of predation, disease, and natural disturbances (e.g., floods and fires).

Designation as the official reptile of Pennsylvania would assist in conservation efforts for the eastern box turtle and other turtles as well as snake and lizard species.

The bill now awaits consideration by the full House.



OUT and ABOUT in the 86th DISTRICT





Always Ready to Serve You

Out of 203 PA State House districts, the 86th Legislative District is the 14th largest in area. To bring services closer to all constituents, I offer office hours at the following locations:

Perry County: 417 W. Main St., New Bloomfield, PA 17068 | **717-582-8119**

Open: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (except holidays)

Juniata County: 28 Industrial Circle, Mifflintown, PA 17059 | **717-436-6001**

Open: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (except holidays)

Lack-Tuscarora EMS Social Hall: Second Wednesday of the month (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.)
9320 PA-75, East Waterford, PA 17021

East Waterford office dates for the rest of 2025: August 13, September 10, October 8,
November 12, and December 10.

Shine Coffee Company: Third Wednesday of every other month (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.)
204 N. Front St., Liverpool, PA 17045

Liverpool office dates for the rest of 2025: September 17 and November 19.

