



STATE REP. PERRY STAMBAUGH

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Always Ready to Serve the 86th District!

SUMMER 2026

KEYSTONE STATE BUDGET MEANS '**DAY OF RECKONING**' (TAX INCREASE) INCHES NEARER

It might have been almost two weeks late, but PA has a 2026–27 state budget. On July 12, the General Assembly adopted a record-breaking \$50.849 billion spending plan, \$750 million more than last year's budget (\$50.1 billion) and a stunning \$3.1 billion **above** the latest non-partisan PA Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) projected Commonwealth revenues for the year of \$47.75 billion.

“ Not raising taxes remains the *REAL* one area where the General Assembly can truly address affordability concerns. ”

While the budget seemingly contains only a modest bump in spending (1.29 percent), negotiators revived number-lowering gimmicks from decades ago such as “cycle roll” — deferring two months of payments, each totaling around \$1.3 billion, owed to managed care organizations that administer Medicaid and CHIP benefits. Leaving cash-flow concerns to the organizations aside, that means around \$2.6 billion more is “in there” and will come due next year.

In all, the ACTUAL \$53.449 billion budget continues PA's path of excessive spending growth and exacerbates our structural deficit — spending more than we bring in, year after year, even in good economic times. The spike in 2026–27 appropriations coupled with expected budget revenues (minus refunds) of \$47.53 billion

translates as follows: Pennsylvania faces a budget shortfall of \$5.9 billion (or almost \$5.7 billion using IFO calculations).

Red ink like this pretty much ensures a raid in 2027–28 on our state's savings account, the \$7.74 billion Rainy Day Fund. Draining or depleting that reserve will raise costs on what the Commonwealth (you and I as taxpayers) pays to float bonds.

Even worse, with our total structural deficit projected to climb to \$25 billion or more within a few years, dust off your checkbook. We are likely staring at a broad-based tax hike — higher levies on personal income, sales and use, business, perhaps even retirement income for the first time. IFO says PA has already passed the point of no return on imposing some kind of tax increase.

The Commonwealth Foundation estimates PA could be looking at an added \$2,100 tax bill per household as soon as 2027–28.

I've said it before, but I'll repeat it: Not raising taxes remains the one real area where the General Assembly can address affordability concerns.

Here's hoping PA residents and businesses keep producing and generating more tax dollars. In the just completed 2025–26 fiscal year, revenues rolled in at \$49.3 billion, more than \$1 billion over expectations. The people of our Keystone State may bail out the legislature and its “aspirational” math yet again.

No Mileage, No Pension, No Per Diem, No Travel Expenses

Keeping in mind that legislative pay and perks come from YOUR tax dollars, I have honored this pledge when it comes to compensation:

No Mileage: I don't request any payment for driving to the Capitol on session days or for hearings, going to my district offices, or traveling on legislative business. I see travel as a regular part of my job, just as you commute to work without being paid mileage for it.

No Pension: I am one of only a handful of Pennsylvania legislators who have refused a state pension, which I believe is clearly prohibited by Article II, Section 8 of the state

constitution. With Pennsylvania burdened by \$60 billion and counting in pension debt, not taking a legislative pension is the responsible thing to do.

No Per Diem or Travel Expenses: I don't receive “extra” pay by taking per diems, which in many ways have been abused and become something of a racket. I further don't seek reimbursement for any travel costs (hotel rooms, meals, etc.) when attending legislative hearings around the state. Again, this is part of my job, and my salary (your tax dollars) can cover it without any need to double-dip into more tax dollars.

EXTENDING ATV/UTV EMERGENCY RANGE MOVES TO HOUSE FLOOR

Addressing a concern brought to me by fire companies in Perry and Juniata counties, the House Transportation Committee last month unanimously moved legislation (**House Bill 2233**) to extend the highway range of fire and ambulance department-owned ATVs/UTVs during emergency situations.



I offered a gut-and-replace amendment based off my **House Bill 297** letting first responder-operated ATVs travel up to 15 miles from a fire or EMS building. The amendment also allows first responder UTVs to travel an unlimited number of miles as long as they have certain safety features, such as doors, lights, a siren, and are insured.

Under current law, these vehicles can only be driven on roads within 2 miles of an EMS or fire station — an arbitrary constraint that hinders service in remote locations.

My amendment was adopted without opposition.

In March, Chief Nick Campell of Blain Volunteer Fire Company testified before the committee about delays he has faced due to UTV limits when mitigating emergency situations.

“Shortly after we purchased our UTV, I found out through training with the State Police that we were restricted to running it just 2 miles from the firehouse,” Campbell noted. “I made the statement that, ‘surely you guys surely wouldn’t pull us over?’ The trooper kind of laughed and said, ‘are you testing me?’ He was probably joking but it got me thinking, ‘What if?’ ”

Campbell added that Blain VFC covers roughly 130 square miles of rural farmland and wooded ridges, including the Tuscarora State Forest. “We have a small station and can’t leave our UTV on a trailer. To use it we must pull out a fire truck to hook up the trailer, then load the UTV, and then unload at the emergency site. Sometimes we must trailer the vehicle around a mountain to get where we need to go. It is all very time consuming.”

He continued, “But our UTV has safety and warning gear and is capable of traveling at posted road speeds if needed.”

The overarching legislation, **HB 2233** (introduced by Rep. Tim Brennan, D-Bucks County) initially dealt with boosting the maximum ATV/UTV range from 2 miles to 10 miles in all counties and allowing for the use of emergency ATVs during special events on closed roadways. In addition, it provided first responder ATVs/UTVs the same protection from liability given to ambulances and fire equipment.

My amendment included his language, with the increase to 15 miles for ATV and unlimited miles for UTV operation. The bill was passed unanimously by the committee and now awaits a vote by the full House.

WAYS TO STAY IN THE KNOW ABOUT PA LEGISLATION

Pennsylvania House votes, debates, and bills — and much more — can be accessed via the General Assembly website. Learn more at palegis.us.

Once there, you can research legislators from various areas, read bills and amendments, review text of floor debates in official journals, and see how House members voted on the floor and in committee. Committee meeting schedules and co-sponsorship memos are also available.

The State Treasury maintains OpenBookPA, a vast resource of data and information related to state finances — including the Fiscal Health Scorecard, daily updates for every state fund, and information about Treasury’s consumer programs — along with the Contracts e-Library, which allows people to search all state contracts valued at \$5,000 or more. www.patreasury.gov/openbookpa/

The PennWATCH website allows citizens to keep tabs on the state budget, spending, revenue, and employees. Pennsylvania also makes it easy for people to review state purchases, lobbyist registrations and reports, and campaign finance reports. www.pennwatch.pa.gov

To look up existing statutes, go to the Statutes section of the General Assembly’s website. From there you can choose to review consolidated statutes, unconsolidated statutes, the state Constitution, recently enacted laws, rules and regulations (PA Code), the PA Bulletin, and more. www.palegis.us/statutes

The Office of Open Records (OOR) maintains information about Pennsylvania’s Right-to-Know Law (RTKL) and Sunshine Act, including information about filing a request for records, a database of Agency Open Records Officers, and a Citizens’ Guide to the RTKL. The OOR also provides information about filing an appeal when a RTK request is denied and provides a variety of training resources, including PowerPoint presentations and videos. www.openrecords.pa.gov/

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 2026: August 12, September 9, October 14, and December 9.
(No November date due to Veterans Day.)

Shine Coffee Company: Third Wednesday of every other month (9 a.m. to 1 p.m.)

Liverpool office dates for 2026: September 16 and November 18.



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