
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2173 Session of
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DALEY AND KRAJEWSKI, DECEMBER 16, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 16, 2021

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Office of New Pennsylvanians and providing for
2 its powers and duties; and establishing the Advisory
3 Committee to Office of New Pennsylvanians and providing for
4 its powers, duties and membership.

5 TABLE OF CONTENTS

6 Chapter 1. Preliminary Provisions

7 Section 101. Short title.

8 Section 102. Legislative policy and declarations.

9 Section 103. Definitions.

10 Chapter 3. Office of New Pennsylvanians

11 Section 301. Establishment of office.

12 Section 302. Powers and duties of office.

13 Chapter 5. Advisory Committee to Office of New Pennsylvanians

14 Section 501. Establishment of advisory committee.

15 Section 502. Membership.

16 Section 503. Powers and duties of advisory committee.

17 Chapter 7. Miscellaneous Provisions

18 Section 701. Effective date.

1 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
2 hereby enacts as follows:

3 CHAPTER 1
4 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

5 Section 101. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Office of New
7 Pennsylvanians Act.

8 Section 102. Legislative policy and declarations.

9 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

10 (1) According to the United States Census Bureau, in
11 2018, Pennsylvania ranked 42nd among the 50 states in
12 population growth since 2010, increasing only 0.86%.

13 (2) In 2019, Pennsylvania's 893,167 foreign-born
14 individuals comprised 7% percent of the Commonwealth's
15 population, an increase of 75.7% since 2000, compared to only
16 1.2% growth in the United States born population.

17 (3) Throughout this Commonwealth's history, immigrants
18 have played a critical role in this Commonwealth's economic,
19 cultural and political growth and success.

20 (4) Policies that promote the attraction, retention and
21 inclusion of immigrants and refugees will help enhance this
22 Commonwealth's economy and diversity, thereby improving the
23 lives of all residents and helping to remove barriers that
24 may undermine immigrants' full potential.

25 (5) Immigrants currently fill skilled positions
26 throughout this Commonwealth's economy and are a vital part
27 of this Commonwealth's economy and tax base. In 2019,
28 immigrant business owners in this Commonwealth generated more
29 than \$1,700,000,000 in business revenue and immigrant
30 spending power increased to \$24,900,000,000.

1 (6) 40% of immigrants in this Commonwealth have a
2 bachelor of arts, bachelor of science or graduate degree,
3 compared to 32% of United-States-born Pennsylvanians.

4 (7) Organizations are providing leadership in this
5 Commonwealth's immigrant integration efforts through programs
6 and services that connect newcomers and longtime
7 Pennsylvanians to economic opportunity.

8 (8) It is essential for this Commonwealth's future that
9 skilled, energetic and entrepreneurial immigrants are
10 attracted, retained and integrated. Immigrants help to
11 bolster this Commonwealth's economy and strengthen the
12 social, civic and cultural fabric.

13 (9) States enforce and provide for many services,
14 licenses and educational and economic opportunities that make
15 it imperative to coordinate the work of state agencies,
16 leverage relationships with partner and nonprofit
17 organizations, and recommend policies and programs that
18 support immigrant inclusion. Immigrants on the path to full
19 civic and economic participation benefit from a welcoming
20 environment and policies that:

21 (i) Increase access to English language instruction
22 and workforce development and employment.

23 (ii) Reduce exploitation and fraud against
24 immigrants.

25 (iii) Connect new Pennsylvanians to legal services
26 and assist on the path to naturalization.

27 (iv) Provide individuals with meaningful access to
28 Commonwealth resources and opportunities regardless of
29 English proficiency.

30 (10) In recognition of these facts and in promotion of

1 the stated goals, the creation of the Office of New
2 Pennsylvanians will help improve the lives and economic
3 prosperity of immigrants and Pennsylvanians generally.

4 Section 103. Definitions.

5 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
6 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
7 context clearly indicates otherwise:

8 "Advisory committee." The Advisory Committee to Office of
9 New Pennsylvanians.

10 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic
11 Development of the Commonwealth.

12 "Office." The Office of New Pennsylvanians.

13 "Secretary." The Secretary of Community and Economic
14 Development of the Commonwealth.

15 CHAPTER 3

16 OFFICE OF NEW PENNSYLVANIANS

17 Section 301. Establishment of office.

18 The Office of New Pennsylvanians is established within the
19 department.

20 Section 302. Powers and duties of office.

21 The office shall:

22 (1) Respond to inquiries from Commonwealth agencies, the
23 media, immigrant-serving organizations and the public about
24 immigration issues in this Commonwealth.

25 (2) Serve as point of contact for Commonwealth licensing
26 boards and the Bureau of Professional and Occupational
27 Affairs.

28 (3) Serve as an information clearinghouse for
29 Commonwealth agencies on immigration-related policy issues
30 and coordinate among agencies as appropriate.

1 (4) Analyze economic, demographic and other trends
2 impacting immigrants in this Commonwealth and make policy
3 recommendations.

4 (5) Ensure that the Commonwealth is gathering relevant
5 data to inform the Commonwealth's policy making on immigrant
6 issues.

7 (6) Develop strategies to attract, retain and integrate
8 immigrants into this Commonwealth.

9 (7) Convene stakeholders in business development and
10 international trade promotion programs to increase capacity
11 to utilize immigrant contributors.

12 (8) Disseminate information to new and prospective
13 immigrant residents of this Commonwealth who wish to invest
14 capital, launch businesses or apply their skills in this
15 Commonwealth.

16 (9) Convene municipal officials to boost peer learning
17 on increasing immigration in cities of the third class
18 struggling with population loss and economic decline.

19 (10) Convene college and university officials to foster
20 learning on strategies for immigrant and international
21 student retention.

22 (11) Provide matching grant funds for high-quality
23 immigration and economic development programs that can
24 demonstrate corporate or philanthropic investment.

25 (12) Disseminate information about available services to
26 assist new and prospective immigrant residents of this
27 Commonwealth on the path to naturalization.

28 (13) Disseminate information about legal services
29 available to new Pennsylvanians in civil legal matters,
30 including housing, family, immigration and other matters.

1 (14) Disseminate information about English language
2 instruction and resources available to immigrant residents of
3 this Commonwealth.

4 (15) Convene stakeholders in Commonwealth agencies,
5 immigrant-serving organizations and the public to identify
6 and reduce exploitation and fraud against immigrants.

7 (16) Convene stakeholders in Commonwealth agencies,
8 immigrant-serving organizations and the public to promote
9 race, sex, gender, age, income and LGBTQ equity and to
10 identify and reduce inequities.

11 (17) Develop strategies to provide immigrants with
12 meaningful access to Commonwealth resources and opportunities
13 regardless of their level of English proficiency.

14 (18) Communicate with Federal and international
15 stakeholders to support the resettlement process for refugees
16 who have been identified for resettlement in the
17 Commonwealth.

18 (19) Evaluate the success of activities and adjust
19 courses as appropriate.

20 CHAPTER 5

21 ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO

22 OFFICE OF NEW PENNSYLVANIANS

23 Section 501. Establishment of advisory committee.

24 The Advisory Committee to Office of New Pennsylvanians is
25 established within the office and shall serve in an advisory
26 capacity to the office in matters regarding immigrants in this
27 Commonwealth. The advisory committee shall be staffed and
28 administered by the office.

29 Section 502. Membership.

30 (a) Public official members.--The advisory committee shall

1 consist of the following members, who shall serve by virtue of
2 their public position:

- 3 (1) The secretary or a designee.
- 4 (2) The Secretary of Administration or a designee.
- 5 (3) The Secretary of Labor and Industry or a designee.
- 6 (4) The Secretary of Education or a designee.
- 7 (5) The Secretary of Human Services or a designee.
- 8 (6) The Secretary of Health or a designee.
- 9 (7) The Secretary of Transportation or a designee.
- 10 (8) The Commissioner of Pennsylvania State Police or a
11 designee.
- 12 (9) The Attorney General or a designee from the Office
13 of the Attorney General, Bureau of Consumer Protection.

14 (b) Nongovernmental members.--The advisory committee shall
15 consist of nongovernmental members to be appointed by the
16 Governor as follows:

17 (1) Three members from an organization that attracts,
18 retains and integrates immigrants into this Commonwealth's
19 economic, cultural and civic affairs. The advisory committee
20 shall establish a minimum of three regions within this
21 Commonwealth for the purpose of appointing one member for
22 each region.

23 (2) One member from a Pennsylvania chapter of the
24 American Immigration Lawyers Association.

25 (3) One member from an institution of higher education
26 who has a primary focus on immigration issues.

27 (4) One member from the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business
28 and Industry or a similar local advocate for economic
29 improvement.

30 (5) One member with expertise in promoting language

1 access plans.

2 (6) One member from an agency focused on providing
3 English language instruction to speakers of other languages.

4 (7) One member from the Pennsylvania banking sector.

5 (8) One member from a workforce training agency.

6 (9) One member from the health care sector.

7 (10) One member from an agency working to increase
8 immigrants' access to healthcare services.

9 (11) One member from a human services agency.

10 (12) One member from a refugee resettlement agency.

11 (13) One member from an agency focused on working with
12 immigrants in matters of tenants' rights.

13 (c) Voting.--

14 (1) All members appointed shall hold voting privileges
15 on all matters brought for consideration before the advisory
16 committee.

17 (2) A simple majority of members with current
18 appointments to the advisory committee shall constitute a
19 quorum for the transaction of any business. An action adopted
20 by the majority of the members present at a meeting in which
21 there is a quorum shall be deemed to be an act of the
22 advisory committee.

23 (d) Terms.--

24 (1) The terms of the members under subsection (a) shall
25 be concurrent with their holding of the public office.

26 (2) A member appointed under subsection (b) shall serve
27 a three-year term as long as they represent the interest of
28 the membership class for which they were appointed and shall
29 serve until a successor is appointed.

30 (e) Chairperson.--The secretary shall serve as chairperson

1 of the advisory committee.

2 (f) Expenses of members.--Members of the advisory committee
3 shall receive no compensation for their services. Members who
4 are not employees of State government shall be reimbursed at
5 established Commonwealth rates for expenses incurred in the
6 performance of their duties on the advisory committee.

7 Section 503. Powers and duties of advisory committee.

8 (a) General rule.--The advisory committee shall:

9 (1) Make recommendations to the Governor and the
10 secretary on policies, procedures, regulations and
11 legislation to attract, retain and integrate immigrants into
12 this Commonwealth's society.

13 (2) Serve as the Governor's liaison to new
14 Pennsylvanians on policies, procedures, regulations and
15 legislation that affect immigrants, in order to ensure that
16 State government is accessible, accountable and responsive to
17 the needs of immigrants.

18 (3) Serve as a resource to all departments, commissions
19 and agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction to ensure that
20 government entities are cognizant of the needs of immigrants
21 and that the entities' respective services and programs are
22 accessible to immigrants.

23 (4) Work with the office to monitor the practices of
24 Commonwealth agencies relating to the attraction, retention
25 and integration of immigrants in order to maximize the
26 efficiency and accessibility to State government.

27 (5) Perform other duties as the Governor and secretary
28 may assign in planning for services and programs for
29 immigrants.

30 (b) Studies and reports.--The advisory committee may conduct

1 studies and issue reports upon request and as necessary on
2 issues affecting immigrants in this Commonwealth.

3 (c) Public hearings.--The advisory committee shall conduct
4 at least one public hearing each year to receive testimony and
5 public comments on improving the attraction, retention and
6 integration of immigrants in this Commonwealth.

7 (d) Construction.--Nothing in this section shall be
8 construed to prevent the advisory committee from establishing ad
9 hoc work groups or local committees to assist in research and
10 other duties necessary to carry out the mission of the office.

11 CHAPTER 7

12 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

13 Section 701. Effective date.

14 This act shall take effect in 60 days.