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SESSION OF 2021 205TH OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

No. 44

SENATE

WEDNESDAY, September 22, 2021

The Senate met at 11 a.m., Eastern Daylight Saving Time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Senator Elder A. Vogel, Jr.) in the Chair.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Reverend DAVID BRANDT, of Lebanon Bible Fellowship Church, Lebanon, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Oh God, we give thanks to You for a new day. Thank You for the ability to be here this morning, for these men and women who serve our Commonwealth, and for the work that You have appointed them to do. Thank You for the skills and abilities that You have given to them and for their unique passion that each one brings to this body. May You help them to accomplish the work that is before them today. Lord, I thank You for the many types of issues that our Senate discusses: issues of commerce; the environment; governance; justice; freedom; fairness; trade; housing; transportation; and so much more. While the issues that are before these men and women today are vast and complex, I ask that You would grant them great success in each one. I pray that You would grant them great knowledge and discernment for each decision, for while there are many times we exercise great wisdom, there are also many times where we feel that we are at a loss, and in these times, Lord, supply Your wisdom. I ask that You would help each one as they communicate their ideas and concerns with one another, for while there are times when we express ourselves with great eloquence, there are also other instances when words fail us.

So, God, I ask that You would give them the gift of communication today. May You also give each one grace and concern for one another as various issues are discussed. For while there are many times when we have compassion and understanding, there are also times where issues are overwhelming and finding common ground is more difficult. So in those times, Lord, I pray that You would grant a spirit of understanding, kindness, unity, and purpose. May You help these men and women accomplish great things today. Sovereignly rule over every piece of legislation, every presentation, and every conversation, so that Your work may be done here in this place. It is in the name of Jesus I ask this. Amen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair thanks Pastor Brandt, who is the guest today of Senator Gebhard.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those assembled.)

BILLS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEES

Senator J. WARD, from the Committee on Aging and Youth, reported the following bills:

SB 871 (Pr. No. 1079)

An Act amending Title 23 (Domestic Relations) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in child protective services, further providing for definitions, for mandatory reporting and postmortem investigation of deaths, for establishment of Statewide database, for access to information in Statewide database, for information in Statewide database, for disposition and expunction of unfounded reports and general protective services reports, for disposition of founded and indicated reports, for expunction of information of perpetrator who was under 18 years of age when child abuse was committed and for release of information in confidential reports, providing for exchange of information for placement, further providing for amendment or expunction of information, for investigating performance of county agency, for employees having contact with children and adoptive and foster parents, for audits by Attorney General, for reports to Governor and General Assembly, for penalties, for services for prevention, investigation and treatment of child abuse, for reports to department and coroner, for investigation of reports, for voluntary or court-ordered services and findings of child abuse and for evidence in court proceedings; and making editorial changes.

HB 1082 (Pr. No. 1830)

An Act establishing an education program to assist in the early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or a related disorder.

Senator YUDICHAK, from the Committee on Community, Economic and Recreational Development, reported the following bill:

SB 706 (Pr. No. 1090) (Amended)

An Act providing for advanced manufacturing facilities and infrastructures through business partnerships with State-related institutions; establishing the Max Manufacturing Initiative Fund and Max Manufacturing Endeavor Loan Fund; and imposing powers and duties on the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Senator LANGERHOLC, from the Committee on Transportation, reported the following bills:

SB 396 (Pr. No. 384)

An Act designating the bridge, identified as Bridge Key 35000, carrying State Route 2040 in Bentleyville Borough, Washington County, as the Mrs. Madeline Finney Memorial Bridge.

SB 667 (Pr. No. 732)

An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in miscellaneous provisions relating to operation of vehicles, providing for protection of children from second-hand smoke in vehicles; and imposing a penalty.

SB 780 (Pr. No. 920)

An Act designating a bridge, identified as Bridge Key 39537, on that portion of State Route 1005 over a tributary of Crooked Creek, Rayne Township, Indiana County, as the Sergeant Charles R. Learn Memorial Bridge.

SB 827 (Pr. No. 1009)

An Act establishing the Weigh Station Preclearance Program in the Pennsylvania State Police; and providing for criteria for preclearance system and devices and for data access.

SB 847 (Pr. No. 1039)

An Act designating the portion of State Route 2004, also known as North Broad Street, within the Borough of Lansdale, in Montgomery County, as the Dr. Frank Erdman Boston Memorial Highway.

SB 859 (Pr. No. 1052)

An Act amending Title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in rules of the road in general, further providing for enforcement of failure to stop for school bus with flashing red lights.

SB 865 (Pr. No. 1056)

An Act designating a bridge, identified as Bridge Key 36020, on that portion on Pennsylvania Route 66, known as Main Street, over the Norfolk Southern Railway, City of Greensburg, Westmoreland County, as the Sergeant Richard Ivory Cullen Memorial Bridge.

SB 867 (Pr. No. 1067)

An Act designating the portion of Pennsylvania Route 309 from the intersection with Pennsylvania Route 29 in Monroe Township, Wyoming County, to the intersection with State Route 1026 in Dallas Township, Luzerne County, as the Kunkle Firefighter Edward L. Nulton, Sr., Memorial Highway.

SB 880 (Pr. No. 1091) (Amended)

An Act designating the portion of State Route 2014/Washington Street beginning at the intersection of South Courtland Street and Day Street at segment 0011 offset 1858 and ending at the intersection of Brown Street at segment 0011 offset 0000 in East Stroudsburg Borough, Monroe County, as the Samuel Newman Way; and making a repeal.

RESOLUTION REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE

Senator LANGERHOLC, from the Committee on Transportation, reported the following resolution:

SR 172 (Pr. No. 1077)

A Resolution urging the Congress of the United States and the United States Department of Transportation to take action on the nationwide school bus driver shortage.

LEGISLATIVE LEAVES

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Westmoreland, Senator Kim Ward.

Senator K. WARD. Mr. President, I request temporary Capitol leaves for Senator Martin, Senator Phillips-Hill, and Senator Bartolotta, and legislative leaves for Senator Aument, Senator Brooks, and Senator Mensch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Allegheny, Senator Costa.

Senator COSTA. Mr. President, I request temporary Capitol leaves for Senator Lindsey Williams, Senator Comitta, and Senator Tartaglione, and legislative leaves for Senator Hughes and Senator Kane.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator Kim Ward requests temporary Capitol leaves for Senator Martin, Senator Phillips-Hill, and Senator Bartolotta, and legislative leaves for Senator Aument, Senator Brooks, and Senator Mensch.

Senator Costa requests temporary Capitol leaves for Senator Lindsey Williams, Senator Comitta, and Senator Tartaglione, and legislative leaves for Senator Hughes and Senator Kane.

Without objection, the leaves will be granted.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Senator K. WARD asked and obtained a leave of absence for Senator BROWNE, for today's Session, for personal reasons.

JOURNAL APPROVED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Journal of the Session of April 28, 2021, is now in print.

The Clerk proceeded to read the Journal of the Session of April 28, 2021.

Senator K. WARD. Mr. President, I move that further reading of the Journal be dispensed with and that the Journal be approved.

On the question,
Will the Senate agree to the motion?

The yeas and nays were required by Senator K. WARD and were as follows, viz:

YEA-49

Argall	Dush	Martin	Schwank
Aument	Flynn	Mastriano	Stefano
Baker	Fontana	Mensch	Street
Bartolotta	Gebhard	Muth	Tartaglione
Boscola	Gordner	Phillips-Hill	Tomlinson
Brewster	Haywood	Pittman	Vogel
Brooks	Hughes	Regan	Ward, Judy
Cappelletti	Hutchinson	Robinson	Ward, Kim
Collett	Kane	Sabatina	Williams, Anthony H.
Comitta	Kearney	Santarsiero	Williams, Lindsey
Corman	Langerholc	Saval	Yaw
Costa	Laughlin	Scavello	Yudichak
DiSanto			

NAY-0

A majority of the Senators having voted "aye," the question was determined in the affirmative.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Journal is approved.

GUESTS OF THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE PRESENTED TO THE SENATE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Centre, Senator Corman.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Mr. President, as we do from time to time when people who help us work here in the Senate retire, we take a moment to pay tribute and to say thank you. Obviously we do that for the folks in our offices, but the Senate is also run by the institutional offices--offices that you do not see as much, but the people who if we do not have, we cannot run the Senate. So, as institutional officer, I wanted to take a moment--as we have several who are retiring here in the next few days--to pay tribute to those folks. As I mentioned, I might ask them to stand, but then we can give them all one round of applause at the end of my remarks. As you can see from the floor, there are a few. So, I rise to offer my thanks and best wishes to several of the Senate employees who are now preparing for their well-deserved retirement. We are blessed to have so many hard-working staff who make it possible for us do our jobs.

As a longtime leader of the Senate Republican Policy Research and Development Office, Mike Mills oversaw countless projects and has supported our Members to advance their agendas. I was actually Policy Chair at one point and worked directly with Mike. We had complex questions, we needed detailed answers, and Mike and his team always took the challenge. Mike was Google before Google was Google. As technology evolved, he made sure his operations evolved with it. He is not the only talented and experienced employee we are losing from our Policy Office; Leigh Ramsey is also retiring. Leigh started out as an intern in the Policy Office before eventually rising to the chief of staff of Senator Mary Jo White. We could always rely on her to do a great job, no matter what tasks she was assigned.

Our communications office is losing two valued employees as well with retirements of Ron Moore and Hanson Quickel. Ron played a role in crafting messaging strategies for many of our Members, including the gentleman from Indiana County, which we will not hold that against him. Ron has a sunny disposition, a positive attitude, and is someone who will be sorely missed when he leaves here in Harrisburg. Hanson served for many years as director of Broadcast Services, where he carried our Caucus' messages through the airwaves since the days of the tape recorder and the reel-to-reel machine. He will now have more time to carry food to all the ducks and wildlife that call his backyard home.

We are also wishing a fond farewell to Donald Moore, who started here as a Senate Page before rising to Specialist of PennDOT work. The number of our constituents he has helped in his role is considerable, and we are all grateful for his efforts. Speaking of Senate Pages, we are saying goodbye and good luck to two: Andrew DiNunzio and June Kreiser. Andrew has done great work in each of the Senate positions he has held, including working in the Senate Chamber and for the 48th Senatorial District. June typifies what it means to be a public servant. If everyone wore a Fitbit, June might get the most steps of anyone here in the Capitol. In addition, she has just been a great person. Her daughter worked with me in the Committee on Appropriations office at one time, and she is someone who we will truly miss.

We also have three valued employees in the Chief Clerk's Office who are heading towards retirement. Mike McGinnis has dedicated 35 years to the Senate, including many years working on my father's staff. Now, you might not know it to look at Mike, but Mike and I go back a little bit further than that. Our mothers were in nursing school together at Indiana, Pennsylvania, and that is how we met and became friends. There is a handcuff story I will not tell here today--Mike is probably glad I am not. But Mike and I became good friends by working with my father with the late, great Denny Sciabica. He became quite a rodeo individual and did a lot of rodeo--a lot of riding of bulls in his day. But while he worked here, both in Computer Services and Telecommunications, he has played a critical role in keeping the lines of communication open at the Capitol and the district offices.

Chris Miller started here as a Senate Page, where he met his wife, Jen. Now, if you walked around the back of this Chamber here, there was always a good chance you were going to get run over by Chris, because there is not anyone who works harder and runs around this place to get his job done and to be more efficient than Chris. He has challenged Senator Regan and Senator DiSanto for the best jacket on the floor here today. But, Chris has been a great employee. No matter what the job was, he always did it and he always did it with a smile. Now, you have to wish him well because he is going home, and he is outnumbered by three daughters and a new granddaughter. So, good luck with that. As you head into your retirement, you will be sorely missed.

Dave Harris is also leaving us, but we will continue to benefit from the groundwork that he laid to secure our mail services. If you have ever been out to the Mail Room--after 9/11 we had to do a completely different job as far as the security of our mail and how it came to the Capitol. Dave really revamped that process and did a fantastic job that has kept us all secure. Again, one of the unsung heroes you may not see, but if it was not for him, you know, a lot of things could have happened here in the Capitol since September 11, and we thank Dave for his service. As a constituent of mine from Juniata County, I am confident to know that he will be in the best place to enjoy his retirement.

So, on behalf of our entire Caucus, I would like to thank you all for your professionalism, your dedication, and for always finding a way to guide and support us when we needed it most. We are grateful for the trail that you have blazed for so many employees here in the Senate and for the standard that you have set, which is what it means to be a public servant. So, may you all enjoy your blessings in this new, exciting chapter of your lives. Thank you all for sharing your time with us and for all that you have done to help serve the people of Pennsylvania. God bless you all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the guests of Senator Corman please rise to be welcomed by the Senate.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thank you all for your service and dedication. The Senate will be at ease.

(The Senate was at ease.)

LEGISLATIVE LEAVES CANCELLED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator Martin, Senator Bartolotta, and Senator Lindsey Williams have returned, and their temporary Capitol leaves are cancelled.

**GUEST OF SENATOR DAVID G. ARGALL
PRESENTED TO THE SENATE**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Schuylkill, Senator Argall.

Senator ARGALL. Mr. President, I am here to congratulate and thank Patricia "Trish" Walasavage Fry, originally from Minersville in Schuylkill County, on her retirement today. She, along with Linda Fetter and Terri Smith in our district offices, will soon be retiring after many years of service. Trish began as a legislative assistant in the House of Representatives from May of 1982, with Representative Kathy Durham, until Kathy's election as a judge in 1996. She then worked with Representative John Barley before I succeeded John as the House Committee on Appropriations chairman almost 20 years ago. We have worked together as a team ever since and for the last 12 1/2 years, she has constantly had to remind me that we do things a little differently here in the Senate than we did in the House.

Her knowledge of our procedures, the dos and the do nots, and the rules that helped this old institution function on a daily basis will be greatly missed. Trish has served the constituents who I represent with professionalism, diligence, and, most importantly, no drama in getting the important job done every day. Trish, thank you for almost 40 years of service to our General Assembly. Congratulations on a job well done. I have no idea how long it is going to take your replacement to understand my handwriting, so thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the guest of Senator Argall please rise to be welcomed by the Senate.

(Applause.)

**GUEST OF SENATOR JUDY WARD
PRESENTED TO THE SENATE**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Blair, Senator Judy Ward.

Senator J. WARD. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize an outstanding Senate team member, Eric Pauley. Eric began his tenure with the Senate almost 34 years ago as an intern for Senator Tim Shaffer. He was then employed by Senator Roger Madigan for a partial year, then hired by Senator John Hopper, and was the executive director of the Committee on Aging and Youth for 4 years. It is ironic that he is back as executive director of the Committee on Aging and Youth, a full circle. After that, he served with Senator Stewart Greenleaf from 1993 to 2018.

Eric and his wife, Judy--that would be another Judy--are looking forward to spending much more time together. Eric plans to spend his free time giving back to his community and volunteering to help others, which says a lot about Eric Pauley the person. Eric is an unbelievable workhorse in my office. He is quiet but gets so much accomplished for the constituents of my district and the Committee on Aging and Youth. Often, I will go into my district office on weekends to get some things done, and I am shooting emails to staff on different issues; Eric always gets right back to me, and I say to him, it is the weekend, you do not have to do that. But, it is a perfect example of his level of commitment not only to me, but to the constituents of the 30th Senatorial District.

I never had to worry about Eric or his work. He was incredibly thorough. Eric, I will miss you so very much. You have been such an integral part of our team and our Senate team as a whole. I wish you well, and congratulations on a job well done. Thank you, Eric.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the guest of Senator Judy Ward please rise to be welcomed by the Senate.

(Applause.)

LEAVES CANCELLED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator Phillips-Hill and Senator Tartaglione have returned, and their temporary Capitol leaves are cancelled.

**GUESTS OF SENATOR JAY COSTA
PRESENTED TO THE SENATE**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Allegheny, Senator Costa.

Senator COSTA. Mr. President, I rise today on a bittersweet day here in our Senate Democratic Caucus as we also have two of our longtime, important staffers who are retiring. I want to take a moment to thank each of them for their tremendous service not only, certainly, to our Caucus but also to the Senate of Pennsylvania and our Commonwealth as a whole.

Tom Lebo is one of those individuals, one of our staff attorneys here in the Senate Caucus. He has been with us on our legal team for approximately 28 years. Tom is a graduate of Dickinson College and Dickinson Law School and began his legal career as a law clerk for a judge in Schuylkill County; but, as I mentioned, he has been with us for a number of years and has specialized in a number of areas.

Tom is an avid outdoorsman and has been our in-house expert, working closely with our good friend, Senator Brewster, on outdoors, hunting, and fishing matters; and all things outdoor and recreational, Tom has been a part of and has been instrumental in measures along those lines. Tom has also developed an expertise in the area of education law. In fact, I would say that there is no one in this building today who has the same amount of knowledge or understanding of our Education Code and School Code as Tom. The work that he has done over the years in the environmental community--working under the leadership of not only C.J. Hafner, our legal counsel, and Ron Jumper but also Gladys Brown--many of us who knew when Gladys was here--that was space that she operated in as well, along with Tom. So, I will tell you that his work is always thoughtful, certainly meaningful, and it is methodical. He thinks things through, and he is the person who, at the last hours, is the one who catches the little changes that need to be made--various pieces of legislation, on the final review or final flip, in many instances.

So, we want to thank Tom for his service to our Caucus and to our Commonwealth and recognize that he is one of the most talkative staff members we have, and that is an inside story. Tom is a very quiet, private person. I will tell you though--come on over, Tom--he has just been a wonderful person. I will tell you, as someone who arrives in this building early, usually around quarter of eight or so, the first person in our office is Tom Lebo. He is there, the light is on, and he is doing his work, certainly, for the Caucus--he said it was because he wanted to beat traffic--

but we know that the real reason is that he wanted to be thoughtful in the work that he has been doing and to make sure that he provides us with good, quality work, which he has done for 28 years. So, I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing and thanking Tom Lebo for the tremendous service he has provided to our Commonwealth. Tom, thank you.

(Applause.)

Mr. President, the second person I would like to recognize has been part of our broadcast team for the past 17 years, Don Rooney. Don, who is also retiring this week--I guess today will be the final day--he has brought years of previous experience in the radio network and the radio industry and has been an integral part of our communications team. Over the years, as we evolved in this Chamber in terms of how we communicate with our constituents and our communities, he has been an integral part of developing the new trends, the new things that we need to do now. What we did 17 years ago and what we do now, we had no idea we would be doing and did not do 17 years ago. So, it is incredible to have folks who have that type of talent, and to be able to share with all of us as we go forward.

Don has covered, you name the event across Pennsylvania, and he has been there bringing the news to our folks, working with our Members, and then delivering on a product to be able to, as I mentioned, provide high-quality video coverage, or news coverage, to the folks who we represent across the State and our Members as well. So, we are very blessed to have two folks, Don Rooney and Tom Lebo, who provide a great service to our Commonwealth and to our respective Caucuses. We certainly are thankful for their dedication, their hard work, and their commitment to making all of us look good in the work that they do behind the scenes. So, thank you both, Don and Tom, for your tremendous work. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking them for their tremendous service to this Commonwealth.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the guests of Senator Costa please rise to be welcomed by the Senate.

(Applause.)

GUESTS OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER M. GEBHARD PRESENTED TO THE SENATE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lebanon, Senator Gebhard.

Senator GEBHARD. Mr. President, I rise today to thank Pastor David Brandt of Myerstown in Lebanon County for today's opening prayer. David Brandt is the assistant pastor at the Lebanon Bible Fellowship Church in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, where he has served in that capacity for the last 15 years. He is joined today by his wife, Sarah. He and Sarah also have two children, Amy and Caleb. Please help me give them a warm Senate welcome.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Would the guests of Senator Gebhard please rise to be welcomed by the Senate.

(Applause.)

CALENDAR

THIRD CONSIDERATION CALENDAR

BILLS OVER IN ORDER

SB 1, SB 113, SB 137, SB 153, SB 236, SB 457 and HB 523 -- Without objection, the bills were passed over in their order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

BILL ON THIRD CONSIDERATION AND FINAL PASSAGE

SB 552 (Pr. No. 579) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law, in agency response, providing for vexatious requester.

Considered the third time and agreed to,

On the question,
Shall the bill pass finally?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Delaware, Senator Kearney.

Senator KEARNEY. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to explain why I will be voting against Senate Bill No. 552. As Minority chair of the Committee on Local Government, and even more so as a local mayor before that, I understand the burdens that abusive Right-to-Know requests can have on our local governments. However, currently, this bill leaves too much in the air about what classifies as vexatious. Instead, this bill leaves most of that decision-making to a single individual: the executive director of the Office of Vital Records. I am sure that all of us would like to see some much-needed updates to the Right-to-Know Law, but it seems that Senate Bill No. 552 does not do enough to address the underlying issues and instead focuses on one individual component that could potentially be harmful to legitimate requests. If there is no formal definition of a vexatious request, would a common request by a news agency for all reimbursements from a previous year--which we know could be hundreds, if not thousands, of records--be considered vexatious? Or a request by an inmate for any pertinent records to their case? As it stands, this legislation does not provide a clear answer. I understand that there will be an avenue for appeal to the Commonwealth Court provided, but that comes at a cost. For individuals who rely upon legal aid organizations, or pro bono attorneys, this cost could be prohibitive. That is why I will be voting "no" and hope that the language can be updated to provide greater clarity.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Jefferson, Senator Dush.

Senator DUSH. Mr. President, this bill will allow the municipality or agency to petition the Office of Open Records for relief from a requester whom the agency alleges is a vexatious requester if the executive director of the Office of Open Records or their designee determines that further proceedings are warranted. The executive director must pursue a resolution through

mediation or a hearing. The executive director or designee must put out a final opinion with appropriate relief that includes, but is not limited to, an order that the agency does not need to comply with future requests from the vexatious requester for no more than 1 year. It requires a mediation last up to 90 calendar days if both parties agree to the mediation--that is both the agency and the requester--and allows for an extension of that if both parties agree. There is cooperation, there is the ability to cooperate.

I would like to thank the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, the Pennsylvania Municipal League, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners, the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, and the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania for their support of this bill. I also thank the Office of Open Records for their cooperation on this bill. This bill will help municipalities, school boards, and other agencies with Right-to-Know requests that save these bodies not only administrative time but also valuable resources and taxpayer dollars. The individuals whom this bill covers are just a tiny fraction of all of the Right to Know requests that are submitted to the counties, municipal governments, and our schools every day. I think this is a measured response. It is very appropriate and helps to save our local communities money. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montgomery, Senator Muth.

Senator MUTH. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to Senate Bill No. 552 for two main reasons. Mostly the cost impact of implementing this legislation. This past budget, the Office of Open Records was flat-funded despite asking for an increase for staffing needs due to a record number of appeals that have come into their office, as well as being able to implement this proposed legislation. They did not get that increase, therefore they cannot hire the additional staff and they are going to have to take these appeals that are coming in already on sheer volume, which is an unprecedented move that will delay the public's access to records. So to add this on top of being flat-funded, it is very difficult, it is impossible, for this office to do what it is designed to do.

Also, the time length in which the appeals, the 90-day window, the main distinction with other legislation and States that have done this is they had up to a year. So, earlier, the Office of Open Records wanted this amendment, and so I had one drafted. It was too late to add on or try, and I was told it would be turned down or be voted down. But, knowing that passing something that we cannot fund while there may be entities, local governments, and school boards that support this legislation--I do not recall them putting in any money to fund it, either. So if it is an unfunded mandate, this will put a huge burden on the Office of Open Records, one of the few things in this Commonwealth that exists to ensure transparency. So, for those reasons, I will be a "no" on this bill. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Schuylkill, Senator Argall.

Senator ARGALL. Mr. President, I have to admit, that at the beginning of this year, when I became the new chairman of the Committee on State Government, I did not know what a vexatious requester was, but because of the good work of the prime sponsor of this bill from Jefferson County, the committee staff, and the stakeholder groups that the Senator from Jefferson County has indicated, this bill is ready to be approved by this

body today. It comes here today as a result of an extraordinary number of stakeholder groups rolling up their sleeves and working together and an extraordinary amount of bipartisan support. It is not an accident that Senator Dush is here today asking for your support, and I would ask all of you to join with him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes, for a second time, the gentleman from Jefferson, Senator Dush.

Senator DUSH. Mr. President, I want to clarify a point that was made previously. Yesterday in the Committee on Appropriations, the fiscal note came back that there would be no fiscal impact to the Commonwealth and to the Office of Open Records unless it got, for some reason, up to something well above what our projections are on it. That is based on the reporting from various stakeholders. They said if there are three or more a month, they will probably have to hire another staff member, but the impact even at that is not going to be significant. Thank you.

And the question recurring,
Shall the bill pass finally?

The yeas and nays were taken agreeably to the provisions of the Constitution and were as follows, viz:

YEA-34

Argall	Dush	Martin	Schwank
Aument	Flynn	Mastriano	Stefano
Baker	Fontana	Mensch	Tomlinson
Bartolotta	Gebhard	Phillips-Hill	Vogel
Boscola	Gordner	Pittman	Ward, Judy
Brewster	Haywood	Regan	Ward, Kim
Brooks	Hutchinson	Robinson	Yaw
Corman	Langerholc	Scavello	Yudichak
DiSanto	Laughlin		

NAY-15

Cappelletti	Hughes	Sabatina	Tartaglione
Collett	Kane	Santarsiero	Williams, Anthony H.
Comitta	Kearney	Saval	Williams, Lindsey
Costa	Muth	Street	

A constitutional majority of all the Senators having voted "aye," the question was determined in the affirmative.

Ordered, That the Secretary of the Senate present said bill to the House of Representatives for concurrence.

LEAVE CANCELLED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator Comitta has returned, and her Capitol leave is cancelled.

CONSIDERATION OF CALENDAR RESUMED

THIRD CONSIDERATION CALENDAR RESUMED

BILLS OVER IN ORDER

SB 673, SB 696, SB 703 and SB 704 -- Without objection, the bills were passed over in their order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

BILLS ON THIRD CONSIDERATION AND FINAL PASSAGE

SB 709 (Pr. No. 1088) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act providing for cytomegalovirus education and newborn screening.

Considered the third time and agreed to, And the amendments made thereto having been printed as required by the Constitution,

On the question, Shall the bill pass finally?

The yeas and nays were taken agreeably to the provisions of the Constitution and were as follows, viz:

YEA-49

Table with 4 columns of names: Argall, Aument, Baker, Bartolotta, Boscola, Brewster, Brooks, Cappelletti, Collett, Comitta, Corman, Costa, DiSanto, Dush, Flynn, Fontana, Gebhard, Gordner, Haywood, Hughes, Hutchinson, Kane, Kearney, Langerholc, Laughlin, Martin, Mastriano, Mensch, Muth, Phillips-Hill, Pittman, Regan, Robinson, Sabatina, Santarsiero, Saval, Scavello, Schwank, Stefano, Street, Tartaglione, Tomlinson, Vogel, Ward, Judy, Ward, Kim, Williams, Anthony H., Williams, Lindsey, Yaw, Yudichak

NAY-0

A constitutional majority of all the Senators having voted "aye," the question was determined in the affirmative.

Ordered, That the Secretary of the Senate present said bill to the House of Representatives for concurrence.

SB 739 (Pr. No. 1089) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending Title 35 (Health and Safety) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in Commonwealth services, further providing for definitions and for assistance to fire companies and EMS companies.

Considered the third time and agreed to, And the amendments made thereto having been printed as required by the Constitution,

On the question, Shall the bill pass finally?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Fayette, Senator Stefano.

Senator STEFANO. Mr. President, I rise in support of Senate Bill No. 739. Senate Bill No. 739 is a culmination of a lot of hard work. In 2018, Senate Resolution No. 6, the Fire and EMS Commission recognized that municipal-owned or career fire companies face many of the same fiscal challenges as volunteer fire companies. The Senate Resolution No. 6 commission unani-

mously recommended that the municipal-owned fire companies be permitted to apply for, and receive, low-interest loans through the volunteer fire loan assistance program operated by the State Fire Commissioner's Office. Last year, Act 91 of 2020 placed a question on the ballot asking voters to approve the change. This public approval was necessary since the voters approved the original bond for the loan program. During the May 2021 primary, Pennsylvanians overwhelmingly voted in favor of the ballot question. Senate Bill No. 739 is the final step needed to codify the voters' approval into law and further assist our Pennsylvania fire companies. Pennsylvania's first responders are always ready to answer the call for service. This financial lifeline is one small way to show these brave men and women that we are thankful for all they do. I ask my colleagues to join me in support of this critical measure.

Thank you, Mr. President.

And the question recurring, Shall the bill pass finally?

The yeas and nays were taken agreeably to the provisions of the Constitution and were as follows, viz:

YEA-49

Table with 4 columns of names: Argall, Aument, Baker, Bartolotta, Boscola, Brewster, Brooks, Cappelletti, Collett, Comitta, Corman, Costa, DiSanto, Dush, Flynn, Fontana, Gebhard, Gordner, Haywood, Hughes, Hutchinson, Kane, Kearney, Langerholc, Laughlin, Martin, Mastriano, Mensch, Muth, Phillips-Hill, Pittman, Regan, Robinson, Sabatina, Santarsiero, Saval, Scavello, Schwank, Stefano, Street, Tartaglione, Tomlinson, Vogel, Ward, Judy, Ward, Kim, Williams, Anthony H., Williams, Lindsey, Yaw, Yudichak

NAY-0

A constitutional majority of all the Senators having voted "aye," the question was determined in the affirmative.

Ordered, That the Secretary of the Senate present said bill to the House of Representatives for concurrence.

BILL OVER IN ORDER

HB 1013 -- without objection, the bill was passed over in its order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

SECOND CONSIDERATION CALENDAR

BILLS OVER IN ORDER

SB 25, SB 56, SB 140, SB 222 and SB 225 -- Without objection, the bills were passed over in their order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

BILL ON SECOND CONSIDERATION AND REREFERRED

HB 245 (Pr. No. 2141) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending the act of December 20, 1985 (P.L.457, No.112), known as the Medical Practice Act of 1985, further providing for license without restriction and for institutional license.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.
Upon motion of Senator K. WARD, and agreed to by voice vote, the bill just considered was rereferred to the Committee on Appropriations.

BILLS OVER IN ORDER

SB 284 and **SB 428** -- Without objection, the bills were passed over in their order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

BILL ON SECOND CONSIDERATION AND REREFERRED

SB 431 (Pr. No. 451) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending Title 34 (Game) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in hunting and furtaking licenses, further providing for authorized license-issuing agents.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.
Upon motion of Senator K. WARD, and agreed to by voice vote, the bill just considered was rereferred to the Committee on Appropriations.

BILLS OVER IN ORDER

SB 435, SB 519, SB 551, SB 562, SB 565, SB 597, SB 607 and **SB 617** -- Without objection, the bills were passed over in their order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

BILL ON SECOND CONSIDERATION

SB 636 (Pr. No. 755) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act authorizing the Department of General Services, with the approval of the Department of Corrections and the Governor, to lease to the County of Wayne a portion of the lands of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at the State Correctional Institution - Waymart, situate in the Township of Canaan and Borough of Waymart, County of Wayne.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.

BILLS OVER IN ORDER

SB 689, SB 705, SB 717, SB 718 and **SB 737** -- Without objection, the bills were passed over in their order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

BILL ON SECOND CONSIDERATION

SB 795 (Pr. No. 950) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act authorizing the Department of General Services, with the approval of the Pennsylvania State Police and the Governor, to grant and convey to Robert Swingle, certain lands and improvements situate in the Township of Richmond, Tioga County.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.

BILLS ON SECOND CONSIDERATION AND REREFERRED

SB 849 (Pr. No. 1043) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in veterans' preference, further providing for definitions; and, in voluntary veterans' preference in private employment, further providing for definitions.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.
Upon motion of Senator K. WARD, and agreed to by voice vote, the bill just considered was rereferred to the Committee on Appropriations.

SB 869 (Pr. No. 1074) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending Title 63 (Professions and Occupations (State Licensed)) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in powers and duties, further providing for definitions and providing for virtual operation.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.
Upon motion of Senator K. WARD, and agreed to by voice vote, the bill just considered was rereferred to the Committee on Appropriations.

BILLS OVER IN ORDER

HB 941 and **HB 951** -- Without objection, the bills were passed over in their order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

BILLS ON SECOND CONSIDERATION AND REREFERRED

HB 1182 (Pr. No. 1715) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending the act of June 19, 1931 (P.L.589, No.202), referred to as the Barbers' License Law, further providing for supervision of shops and schools and licenses and renewal.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
 Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.

Upon motion of Senator K. WARD, and agreed to by voice vote, the bill just considered was rereferred to the Committee on Appropriations.

HB 1183 (Pr. No. 1716) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending the act of May 3, 1933 (P.L.242, No.86), referred to as the Cosmetology Law, further providing for requirements of a school of cosmetology.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
 Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.

Upon motion of Senator K. WARD, and agreed to by voice vote, the bill just considered was rereferred to the Committee on Appropriations.

BILL OVER IN ORDER

HB 1500 -- Without objection, the bill was passed over in its order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

**BILL ON SECOND CONSIDERATION
 AND REREFERRED**

HB 1591 (Pr. No. 2139) -- The Senate proceeded to consideration of the bill, entitled:

An Act amending the act of August 9, 1955 (P.L.323, No.130), known as The County Code, in names and corporate powers, classification of counties, further providing for ascertainment, certification and effect of change of class; and making related repeals.

Considered the second time and agreed to,
 Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for third consideration.

Upon motion of Senator K. WARD, and agreed to by voice vote, the bill just considered was rereferred to the Committee on Appropriations.

BILL OVER IN ORDER

HB 1598 -- Without objection, the bill was passed over in its order at the request of Senator K. WARD.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 BILLS ON FIRST CONSIDERATION**

Senator STEFANO. Mr. President, I move that the Senate do now proceed to consideration of all bills reported from committees for the first time at today's Session.

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

The bills were as follows:

SB 396, SB 667, SB 706, SB 780, SB 827, SB 847, SB 859, SB 865, SB 867, SB 871, SB 880 and HB 1082.

And said bills having been considered for the first time,
 Ordered, To be printed on the Calendar for second consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SECRETARY

The following announcements were read by the Secretary of the Senate:

SENATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021

11:00 A.M.	EDUCATION (public hearing on the impacts of PA Department of Health orders on Pennsylvania's children and schools)	Room 8E-B East Wing (LIVE STREAMED)
1:00 P.M.	STATE GOVERNMENT (public hearing to take testimony on Senate Bill No. 878 legislation to implement recommendations of the Senate Special Committee on Election Integrity and Reform)	Hrg. Rm. 1 North Off. (LIVE STREAMED)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2021

11:00 A.M.	TRANSPORTATION (public hearing on vehicle emissions and electrification)	Hrg. Rm. 1 North Off. (LIVE STREAMED)
12:00 P.M.	HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (to consider Senate Bills No. 782, 815 and 818; and House Bills No. 1774 and 1861)	Room 8E-A East Wing (LIVE STREAMED)
Off the Floor	APPROPRIATIONS (to consider Senate Bills No. 224, 725, 729, 736, 738 and 764; and House Bill No. 1591)	Senate Chamber (LIVE STREAMED)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

10:00 A.M.	ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY (to consider Senate Bills No. 525, 806 and 832; and an informational briefing on PJM's MOPR proposal and maintaining competitive and reliable energy markets)	Hrg. Rm. 1 North Off. (LIVE STREAMED)
10:00 A.M.	LABOR AND INDUSTRY (to consider Senate Bills No. 320, 634 and 775; and House Bill No. 723)	Room 461 Main Capitol
10:30 A.M.	EDUCATION (to consider Senate Bills No. 603, 786 and 846)	Room 8E-A East Wing (LIVE STREAMED)
12:00 P.M.	STATE GOVERNMENT (to consider Senate Bills No. 507, 573, 640, 745 and 862; Senate Resolutions No. 67 and 152; and House Bill No. 1452)	Room 8E-A East Wing (LIVE STREAMED)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

9:00 A.M.	LAW AND JUSTICE (S) and LIQUOR CONTROL (H) (joint public hearing on PA Liquor Control Board supply chain disruption)	Room 140 Main Capitol
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9:30 A.M.	COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (to consider Senate Bills No. 635 and 830)	Room 8E-B East Wing (LIVE STREAMED)
10:30 A.M.	CONSUMER PROTECTION AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE (to consider House Bill No. 1849)	Room 461 Main Capitol

PETITIONS AND REMONSTRANCES

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lycoming, Senator Yaw.

Senator YAW. Mr. President, it is my pleasure to speak on Senate Resolution No. 182, designating the week of September 20 through 24, 2021, as SepticSmart Week in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania's on-lot septic systems are a naturally, environmentally friendly method of treating household wastewater without straining local waste treatment facilities. They are obviously very important, especially in rural Pennsylvania. The average indoor use of water in a typical family home is approximately 150 to 300 gallons a day that filters through these systems. Proper maintenance of an on-lot system is necessary to avoid costly repairs. Efforts should be made to promote awareness of the importance of properly maintaining and servicing these on-lot septic systems. Members of the Pennsylvania Septic Management Association have made consumer education a major priority, and we should, too. Mr. President, I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in designating the week of September 20 through 24, 2021, as SepticSmart Week in Pennsylvania.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Philadelphia, Senator Tartaglione.

Senator TARTAGLIONE. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about Senate Resolution No. 171, which recognizes September 2021 as National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month in Pennsylvania. This medical issue is near and dear to my heart. More than 294,000 Americans are living with spinal cord injuries, including 40,000 military veterans and thousands of Pennsylvanians. Every 48 minutes, another American becomes paralyzed from a spinal cord injury, meaning there will be close to 11,000 new spinal cord injury patients in the United States this year. This month gives us the opportunity to learn about spinal cord injuries, recognize the daily challenges encountered by injured people, and acknowledge the achievements of those Americans living with spinal cord injuries. With this resolution, I hope to raise awareness of the issue and improve access to treatment for individuals with spinal cord injuries. Therefore, I ask you to please join me in recognizing September 2021 as National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month in the Commonwealth. Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes, for a second time, the gentlewoman from Philadelphia, Senator Tartaglione.

Senator TARTAGLIONE. Mr. President, today marks 5,554 days since the Pennsylvania legislature last raised the minimum wage. That is more than 15 years, and it is far too long.

Mr. President, a great deal of time and effort has been spent during the COVID-19 pandemic debating and, in many cases, arguing over the economic impact of the supplemental unemployment benefits programs that were created under Federal pandemic relief legislation. Many employers, the business asso-

ciations who represent them, and the elected officials they support invented a narrative that supplemental unemployment benefits were causing a labor shortage.

We were told time and again that businesses could not find good help because workers would rather sit at home collecting government checks. Now that those temporary Federal programs have ended, we have real information rather than speculation and empty political rhetoric, and we know better. In a recent op-ed for the *Inquirer*, the chief of Moody's Analytics wrote that enhanced unemployment benefits were "of no meaningful consequence" on unemployment rates during the pandemic recovery. Mr. President, that is a direct quote, "of no meaningful consequence." We know this because about half of the nation's States ended supplemental unemployment benefits prior to the September 4 Federal deadline. Yet, there is no measurable difference in the employment recovery in those States compared to States that continued providing supplemental benefits through September 4. On the other hand, the data show that enhanced unemployment benefits were vital in supporting our workforce and our economy through the darkest days of the pandemic.

The Census Bureau recently reported that an additional 4.7 million Americans would have fallen into poverty in 2020 if not for federally funded unemployment benefits. With those benefits in place, the Federal poverty rate was 11.4 percent for the year. It would have been 12.9 percent without those benefits. Expanded unemployment benefits decreased poverty among all racial and age groups but helped part-time and seasonal workers the most. Their poverty rate was 4.1 percent lower than it would have been without those Federal unemployment benefits. Meanwhile, the Federal unemployment benefits help keep businesses and the economy afloat by increased customer spending. Mr. President, these are precisely the same outcomes that Pennsylvania will see once we finally raise our minimum wage to a fair, family-sustaining wage.

My minimum wage legislation, Senate Bill No. 12, will reward workers for their heroic efforts throughout the pandemic, compel unemployed folks to return to the workforce, improve consumer spending, and drive the economy. I urge my colleagues to support Senate Bill No. 12 and advance the bill without delay.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Washington, Senator Bartolotta.

Senator BARTOLOTTA. Mr. President, I am pleased to be jointly sponsoring this resolution with Senator Robinson. The United States Constitution adopted the principles upon which our Republic was established, including the liberties, freedoms, and inalienable rights we as Americans enjoy. The celebration of the Constitution, the supreme law of the land, was started by the Daughters of the American Revolution, or DAR. In 1955, DAR petitioned Congress to set aside September 17 through 23, annually, to be dedicated for the observance of Constitution Week. The resolution was later adopted by the United States Congress and signed into law on August 2, 1956, by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. September 17, 2021, marked the 234th anniversary of the framing of the Constitution by the Constitutional Convention. That is why it is appropriate to accord official recognition to this historic document, its memorable anniversary, and the patriotic celebrations which will commemorate it.

The importance of honoring our United States Constitution rings especially true to me as my sixth great-grandfather fought in the American Revolution, which led to the establishment of our Constitution. Captain Samuel Wells has been noted in many textbooks. These rights were not won easily, instead paid with lives lost in the bloody break from Britain. Together, we need to urge all Pennsylvanians to reaffirm the ideals that the Framers of the Constitution had in 1787 by protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through this guardian of our liberties. I ask our colleagues to join us in recognizing Constitution Week in Pennsylvania.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Allegheny, Senator Robinson.

Senator ROBINSON. Mr. President, I am honored to join Senator Bartolotta in sponsoring this resolution that pays tribute to our Constitution. Two hundred thirty-four years ago we, as a nation, overcame major areas of disagreement, including those between large and small States and urban and rural areas, in order to form a stable political system. James Madison, the well-known Founder of the Constitution, said, "the happy Union of these States is a wonder; their Constitution a miracle; their example the hope of Liberty throughout the world." The Constitution is a miracle. It is the oldest written and codified national constitution in place. It is also the shortest. It is an enduring document that provides the framework for our nation and even the business we do here, each day, under this dome.

The Founding Fathers knew that the biggest threat to freedom is the government. The strength of our Constitution comes from the limits that it places on the government. After all, it is, we the people. We the people are the only legitimate source of power for this great nation and our Commonwealth. We the people are the ones who fight in the wars that are fought in defense of our way of life established by the Constitution and the rights and freedoms found within. We the people must continue to make moments such as this to commemorate the signing of one of the most influential documents in our history. Nearly 100 years after the Constitutional Convention, activist Frederick Douglass said, "the problem is whether the American people have loyalty enough, honor enough, patriotism enough, to live up to their own Constitution." I believe that we do. I join Senator Bartolotta in asking all of our colleagues to join us in recognizing Constitution Week in Pennsylvania.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Fayette, Senator Stefano.

Senator STEFANO. Mr. President, I rise along with Senator Baker in support of Senate Resolution No. 161, which designates September 26 as Gold Star Mother's Day in Pennsylvania. Gold Star Mothers have seen the highest of highs watching their sons and daughters enlist in the United States Armed Forces and, conversely, they have experienced the lowest of lows learning that their son or daughter gave their life in defense of our nation. What makes Gold Star Mothers even more remarkable is they do not give up. They do not give up on others in their circumstances, and they will not give up on this nation.

Recent actions in Afghanistan have resulted in additional mothers, fathers, and families joining these somber ranks. Our hearts go out to these families. Today, we extend our most profound reverence, sorrow, and gratitude to our Commonwealth's

Gold Star Mothers as they continue their mournful journey, struggle to overcome heartache, and honor the children they have lost and the heroic legacy that these children leave behind.

Mr. President, I ask that we recognize Pennsylvania's Gold Star Mothers by observing a moment of silence for the sons and daughters they have lost.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Luzerne, Senator Baker.

Senator BAKER. Mr. President, I am honored to stand here today with my colleague, Senator Stefano, as we come together to designate Sunday, September 26, as Gold Star Mother's Day in Pennsylvania. The United States is filled with brave patriots who devote their lives in service to our country. Those men and women who pay the ultimate sacrifice to defend our freedoms far too often leave behind proud, yet grieving, families who are forced into that reluctant journey of carrying on, in living a life without them. Our action today through the passage of this resolution is rooted in a long-held American tradition of gratitude and sympathy to mothers of those who have passed.

In the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt recognized Gold Star Mothers for their strength and inspiration following the death of a son or daughter during their time of military service. Eighty-five years ago, Congress also issued a joint resolution establishing the national recognition as the last Sunday in September. America remains the land of the free, in large part, because of the courageous sacrifices of our military and their loved ones. My friend and constituent, Marianne Cleary, learned of her son's passing 2 weeks before he was expected to return home from his service. She was baking Christmas cookies, looking forward to the holiday, and she learned that her son, Lieutenant Michael Cleary, had passed in service. No words or moments of silence can heal a broken heart like Marianne Cleary's, or any mother who has experienced that loss. But our actions here are intended to remember and honor the heroism of their children and to recognize the tremendous personal, the deep personal loss and pain on behalf of our nation. So, I thank my colleague for joining me in support of this resolution for Gold Star Mother's Day on Sunday, September 26, and I, too, ask for a moment of silence as we honor and remember those lives lost and the mothers who continue to carry on in their memory.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thank you, Senator Stefano and Senator Baker, as we honor a moment of silence for our Gold Star Mothers, all rise.

(Whereupon, the Senate en bloc stood in a moment of silence in solemn respect to the GOLD STAR MOTHERS.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes, for the second time, the gentleman from Fayette, Senator Stefano.

Senator STEFANO. Mr. President, along with Senator Muth, the co-chair of the Committee on Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness, we solemnly remember the emergency medical service providers who have lost their lives while trying to rescue others and serve their community. EMS has always been there for us, 24/7, 365 days, and when the alarm goes off, they selflessly respond. Unfortunately, 69 EMS providers have made the ultimate sacrifice since 2013. So, with Senate Resolution No. 160, we designate September 13 as EMS Memorial Day in Pennsylvania. Last week, the Pennsylvania EMS Provider Foundation

organized an EMS memorial service at the State Capitol to remember all of our fallen EMS providers.

Thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to mark EMS Memorial Day in Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Montgomery, Senator Muth.

Senator MUTH. Mr. President, I rise along with my colleague today from Fayette County, Senator Stefano--who has been one of the best chairman to work with as far as chairing a committee--to support Senate Resolution No. 160, which would make September 30, 2021, Emergency Medical Services Memorial Day in Pennsylvania. We actually have an increase in EMS deaths due to COVID-19. We have over 56 COVID-19 related deaths in Pennsylvania from our EMS personnel as they take every call, no matter what; they show up at every door, situation, scene, incident, not knowing what to expect, and then layer in a deadly pandemic. These individuals are grossly overworked; we have a shortage of EMS workers. The suicide rates for this profession are through the roof, the highest amongst first responders.

To truly honor these individuals who lost their lives in the line of duty, I think the best way to do that is for us, as a body, to push forward to pass legislation and reforms; to fully fund them; to make sure that they have adequate funding for training, safety equipment, a living wage; and have access to mental health care for PTSIs. Every call has the potential to be very traumatic. Sometimes there are a dozen or more really horrific things you see in a day--and those who have lost their lives, whether on the job because they are driving to an incident, a vehicle crash, suicide, or any of the reasons where these individuals are put at risk. We have to fix these gaping holes in this profession because we all know if we ever have to call 911--I am sure we all can agree that we want someone to show up who is experienced, who has the appropriate equipment, and who shows up in a timely manner to do their jobs, which is saving lives. So, to all the families out there who have lost someone in this profession, the best way to honor their legacy is to push forward and make sure this profession survives. So thank you, again, Senator Stefano, for allowing me to be a part of this resolution.

Thank you, Mr. President.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Fayette, Senator Stefano.

Senator STEFANO. Mr. President, I move that the Senate do now recess until Monday, September 27, 2021, at 1 p.m., Eastern Daylight Saving Time, unless sooner recalled by the President pro tempore.

The motion was agreed to by voice vote.

The Senate recessed at 12:23 p.m., Eastern Daylight Saving Time.