

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
BUDGET HEARING

STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA

MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
140 MAJORITY CAUCUS ROOM

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2019
2:36 P.M.

PRESENTATION ON
PA DEPARTMENT OF AGING

BEFORE:

HONORABLE STANLEY E. SAYLOR, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE ROSEMARY M. BROWN
HONORABLE LYNDA SCHLEGEL CULVER
HONORABLE SHERYL M. DELOZIER
HONORABLE GEORGE DUNBAR
HONORABLE JONATHAN FRITZ
HONORABLE MATT GABLER
HONORABLE KEITH J. GREINER
HONORABLE SETH M. GROVE
HONORABLE MARCIA M. HAHN
HONORABLE DOYLE HEFFLEY
HONORABLE R. LEE JAMES
HONORABLE FRED KELLER
HONORABLE JOHN A. LAWRENCE
HONORABLE JASON ORTITAY
HONORABLE CLINT OWLETT
HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER B. QUINN
HONORABLE GREG ROTHMAN
HONORABLE JAMES B. STRUZZI II

* * * * *

Debra B. Miller

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BEFORE (continued):

HONORABLE JESSE TOPPER
HONORABLE RYAN WARNER
HONORABLE MARTINA A. WHITE
HONORABLE MATTHEW D. BRADFORD, DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE DONNA BULLOCK
HONORABLE MORGAN CEPHAS
HONORABLE CAROLYN T. COMITTA
HONORABLE AUSTIN A. DAVIS
HONORABLE MARIA P. DONATUCCI
HONORABLE ELIZABETH FIEDLER
HONORABLE MARTY FLYNN
HONORABLE ED GAINNEY
HONORABLE PATTY KIM
HONORABLE STEPHEN KINSEY
HONORABLE LEANNE KRUEGER
HONORABLE STEPHEN McCARTER
HONORABLE BENJAMIN V. SANCHEZ
HONORABLE PETER SCHWEYER

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

HONORABLE CAROL HILL-EVANS
HONORABLE MARK M. GILLEN
HONORABLE THOMAS P. MURT
HONORABLE FRANCIS X. RYAN
HONORABLE CHRIS SAINATO
HONORABLE STEVE SAMUELSON
HONORABLE MIKE TURZAI, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
HONORABLE DAN K. WILLIAMS

COMMITTEE STAFF PRESENT:

DAVID DONLEY
MAJORITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RITCHIE LaFAVER
MAJORITY DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MIRIAM FOX
DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TARA TREES
DEMOCRATIC CHIEF COUNSEL

I N D E X

TESTIFIERS

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THOMAS M. SNEDDEN DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANCE (PACE), PA DEPARTMENT OF AGING.....	--

SUBMITTED WRITTEN TESTIMONY

* * *

See submitted written testimony and handouts online under "Show:" at:

https://www.legis.State.pa.us/cfdocs/Legis/TR/Public/tr_finder_public_action.cfm?tr doc typ=T&billBody=&billTyp=&billNbr=&hearing month=&hearing day=&hearing year=&NewCommittee=Appropriations&subcommittee=&subject=&bill=&new title=&new salutation=&new first name=&new middle name=&new last name=&new suffix=&hearing loc=

P R O C E E D I N G S

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(Continued from February 11, 2019.)

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: I would call the Appropriations hearing back to order.

And I would ask Secretary Torres, and Tom, if you would, and Troy, if you would, rise and raise your right hand:

Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is true to the best of your knowledge, information, and belief? If so, say "I do."

(Testifiers responded "I do.")

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: We'll start off with our first questioner, Representative Delozier.

REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being back to finish up some of the questions that we had had. I appreciate the additional information.

I had had two questions on the IG's findings. One of them was the Finding 6, and that had to do with the fact that 24 of the 25 reports and reviews have been late,

1 but then on top of that, what happened to the other 27?

2 So those are the two questions as to why, you
3 know, they ended up coming in late. And then the other 27
4 that were not inspected in the last year, A, are they going
5 to be inspected, and this year, do you have intent with
6 2019 of being able to hit all of them?

7 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Thank you,
8 Representative.

9 All the monitoring site visits were conducted in
10 2018. We were challenged with vacancies, and that's what
11 caused the delay in getting some of them done according to
12 the timetable that we had set.

13 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Okay.

14 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Since then, we have
15 added full-time staff. We have added two contractors. And
16 since I have arrived at the Department, I'm looking at our
17 vacancies and evaluating where we may need to make some
18 shifts as well. So it is our intent to stay on schedule
19 with those monitoring site visits.

20 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Okay. And did I hear
21 you correctly, did you say all 52 were evaluated last year?

22 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: That's correct. They
23 were.

24 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Oh; okay. But the
25 findings then are only 24.

1 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: I think it was because
2 of the period of time that they had looked at. But there
3 was some that were still---

4 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: In process?

5 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Correct.

6 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Oh; okay. All right.

7 Thank you for that.

8 And the other question that I had had was, it was
9 dealing with Finding 3, and what was the cost of the
10 contracts providing the training to the AAAs? How much it
11 had cost to train. I know you had said you had increased
12 that.

13 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Right.

14 We have two contracts. The contract with Temple
15 Institute on Protective Services is approximately 576,000,
16 and then we have a \$35,000 contract with LTLTI, which is an
17 organization that does online learning management training
18 for the Department and for the network.

19 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: And what did you say
20 the name was?

21 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: The Long Term Training
22 Institute.

23 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: Long Term. Okay.

24 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Yeah.

25 REPRESENTATIVE DELOZIER: All right. Thank you

1 very much. I appreciate that.

2 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Thank you.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative Culver.

4 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: Thank you.

5 Over here, Secretary.

6 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Okay.

7 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: Thanks for coming back to
8 answer some of our questions.

9 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Thank you.

10 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: The last time I was
11 talking about the PENNCARE waiting list, and some of my
12 questions had to do with, you know, how many people were on
13 the waiting list; is that something that's localized.

14 I did, since you were here, talk to some of my
15 locals, and just, I'm assuming this is similar in most
16 areas. In the last 8 years, we had a 74-percent increase
17 in reported cases for protective services.

18 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Correct.

19 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: Fifty-eight percent of
20 those were substantiated for abuse or neglect. And they
21 also -- this may not be normal -- had a 33-percent growth
22 over the last decade in 85-plus seniors, 85 years and older
23 in seniors, and that's saying something when you have
24 seniors that old that are going to be needing more
25 services.

1 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Mm-hmm.

2 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: So we're concerned about
3 these waiting lists.

4 So I guess the final question that I would have
5 for you is, what are the top three services that seniors
6 are waiting to receive?

7 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Okay.

8 Well, let's start with the waiting lists in terms
9 of -- and just to clarify, because PENNCARE is a line item
10 with a lot of different programs. So the waiting lists
11 that I'll be referring to, the numbers are specific to the
12 Options Program.

13 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: Okay.

14 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: So currently, we have
15 3,959 individuals who are on the waiting lists. However,
16 again, there needs to be a clarification that that doesn't
17 mean that all of them have no service being rendered to
18 them.

19 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: Excellent.

20 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: There's 1,347 that are
21 receiving some level of services.

22 The AAAs have a lot of autonomy, and I think we
23 mentioned that before.

24 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: Mm-hmm.

25 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: So some AAAs choose to,

1 when a care plan is developed on an individual, provide the
2 full complement of services that are being recommended. In
3 other cases, so that there isn't a waiting list, they'll
4 provide those that are most immediate and essential to the
5 individual. So it may be a lower, a lower scope of
6 services that is being provided.

7 So as a result, some counties will have a waiting
8 list and others won't. Right now, there's 18 counties that
9 do not have waiting lists out of---

10 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: 67.

11 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: The 67 counties.

12 Correct.

13 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: Do you know, like
14 overall, is there three services in particular where---

15 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Yes.

16 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: ---there's the greatest
17 need?

18 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Correct. But the
19 primary services that individuals are waiting for is
20 personal care, home support, and personal emergency
21 response systems, so those devices that will alert someone
22 that a senior is in trouble and needs help.

23 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: So that's consistent with
24 the data I'm getting from back home, I think.

25 I thank you for that. I just, I know some of my

1 Area Agencies on Aging didn't have a waiting list until
2 2018.

3 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Mm-hmm.

4 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: We have talked about the
5 silver tsunami that is coming upon us, and with the
6 statistics I gave you, you can see I have a district with
7 quite an aging population, who are, for the most part,
8 fairly mobile and independent but over time may need some
9 assistance. So my concern is the growth of this waiting
10 list is going to continue, and I would hate to see it---

11 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Yeah.

12 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: ---get out of reach or
13 something that we can't control.

14 So if we could continue the dialogue. If you see
15 an uptick in that list, could you please inform us to see
16 if there's something we should be doing.

17 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Sure.

18 The other thing I wanted to add, so the Committee
19 understands, we monitor the lists as well on our end, and
20 as resources become available, we'll look for opportunities
21 to support the AAAs.

22 So again, we're trying to stay on top of that as
23 well, because I agree in terms of the numbers you cited and
24 in terms of the senior population. We're at about
25 24 percent, and in the next 2 years, 25 percent of our

1 population will be over 60, and that is going to grow.

2 I think the diversity of that population is
3 another factor that we have to take into account. So I
4 agree with you, and it's something that we'll continue to
5 monitor very closely.

6 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: Right. And I think some
7 of what concerns me is we have people who need in-home
8 services, and if we have a significant amount of those
9 people on the waiting list, what's going on until we get
10 them off the waiting list? Are they becoming sicker? Are
11 they needing nursing home care, when we may have been able
12 to avoid it. So that's one of my concerns.

13 Thank you for coming back, and thank you for your
14 testimony.

15 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Thank you,
16 Representative.

17 REPRESENTATIVE CULVER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative Brown.

19 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20 And thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being back.

21 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Thank you.

22 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: We have obviously had a
23 very strong conversation on the opioid crisis and all the
24 efforts that we're working on in Pennsylvania, and a
25 segment of that is obviously the children of some of these

1 people who are struggling with addiction, a very big
2 segment.

3 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Mm-hmm.

4 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Many, many families in my
5 district, across the State, across the country, thank
6 goodness for the grandparents who jump in and really try to
7 help, and obviously family is the most critical to keep
8 together and for the most success for the child moving
9 forward.

10 But what I wanted from you -- and I'm hoping we
11 can follow up a little bit more in the questions that were
12 to you the other day -- is, what recommendations do you
13 have as far as your agency; as far as what the Legislature
14 can do to really help with these policies; to help
15 grandparents, whether through the legal, the protective
16 services, through resources. What can you recommend to us
17 on that process?

18 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Well, I could tell you
19 that in terms of grandfamilies, there is immediate help
20 available through our department's Caregiver Support
21 Program, and we would certainly welcome any help promoting
22 these services with your constituents.

23 This is a program that can provide these
24 grandparents with some support, can give them a break from
25 their caregiving responsibilities, provide reimbursement

1 for expenses associated with caregiving that they are
2 encountering as a result of taking care of grandchildren,
3 and these would be services, supplies, education, training,
4 counseling.

5 These services have been underutilized, and as a
6 result, over the last 2 months we had a statewide campaign
7 to promote the services to ensure that the grandparents
8 could become aware of them and actually take advantage of
9 these services.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Is that -- I'm sorry to
11 interrupt you.

12 Is that, so you're talking about respite, you're
13 talking about child-care expenses and things like that. Is
14 this income eligible?

15 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: No.

16 Yeah; it's a reimbursement-based program, so it's
17 not -- income is not factored into that.

18 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Okay.

19 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: So they apply for it,
20 and then, based on their expenses, they can apply for
21 reimbursement.

22 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Okay.

23 Okay. Sorry. Continue.

24 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: So in terms of other
25 legislative recommendations that we may have, we are

1 looking to see if there's any particular barriers that we
2 could recommend to the Legislature in terms of whether
3 there's a cap on the program, so that's something that
4 we're looking at to see if we can come up with some
5 recommendations there.

6 The last time I was here, I mentioned that there
7 was a workgroup. We had, before my arrival at the
8 Department of Aging, we had three listening tours. We
9 engaged grandparents and tried to find out what are the
10 biggest issues they were facing in terms of dealing with
11 grandchildren at, you know, the later stage of their lives.

12 This month, we scheduled a series of three
13 meetings over the next few months. We'll have one at the
14 end of this month. There are 11 sets of grandparents that
15 are a part of that group. So the Department of Aging,
16 Department of Education, Human Services, Drug and Alcohol,
17 we're all going to be a part of that group, along with some
18 stakeholders that were engaged, again, during the listening
19 tours.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Will you be showing some
21 sort of report after those meetings?

22 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: That's our objective.
23 So we'll go through the end of July, and then, so by
24 August, any actionable recommendations that would come from
25 the discussions and engaging with those grandparents we

1 certainly would put forth. And if there's any legislative
2 recommendations, I'm happy to have those discussions as
3 well.

4 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Yeah. I think we are
5 obviously always looking at that and our constituents are
6 giving us some feedback. But we're looking for your agency
7 as well to really offer us some recommendations from your
8 daily life---

9 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Mm-hmm.

10 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: ---and with the other
11 agencies to try to help us help this situation and this
12 part of, not just the opioid crisis. There's a few other
13 issues obviously attached to it, too. But we would like
14 some more details on that---

15 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Sure. Absolutely.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: ---that could help us move
17 in the right direction.

18 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: And the last thing I
19 wanted to offer is, the Department has provided input.
20 There was a resolution to have the Joint State Government
21 Commission look at this issue as well, and we have provided
22 input. And I believe over the next several months, that's
23 a report that will be presented to the Legislature.

24 So again, our input will be in there as well, and
25 if we have the opportunity as we engage these grandfamilies

1 to add additional input, we'll be happy to do that as well.

2 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Okay.

3 I think I am running out of time, but are there
4 any proposals that you're aware of that have been presented
5 so far by the Legislature that you would support?

6 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Related to
7 grandfamilies in particular?

8 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Yeah. Have you seen
9 anything that has been presented from Legislators on a
10 proposal?

11 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: I know Representative
12 -- well, it has already passed, but Representative
13 Pashinski, I guess, passed, you know, legislation or put
14 forth legislation that the Legislators passed to support
15 temporary guardianship issues.

16 At least from some of the initial conversations,
17 there are a lot of legal concerns that the grandparents
18 have, so I think that's something that we'll be having more
19 discussions on.

20 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Okay. Thank you very
21 much.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Thank you.

24 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
25 Struzzi.

1 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Just a few additional questions -- up here, guys
3 -- related to the PENNCARE program.

4 I'll just read the questions to you:

5 Are individuals providing Options services
6 already paid more than \$12 an hour?

7 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: So the AAAs negotiate
8 with service providers to provide Options services.

9 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: Mm-hmm.

10 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Those are negotiated
11 rates. We do not have the ability to see what labor rates
12 are as part of what's negotiated, so I'm unable to respond
13 to that specific question.

14 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: You could find out,
15 though?

16 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: What's that?

17 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: Could you find out?

18 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Well, that's something
19 that's negotiated between the Area Agencies on Aging and
20 the service providers, so I'm not -- we don't have access
21 to that information, so that's something that is negotiated
22 outside of our---

23 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: Right.

24 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: ---our purview.

25 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: Okay.

1 For the four required Options services -- care
2 management, in-home meals, adult daily living, and personal
3 care -- who qualifies for each of these four services?

4 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Well, in terms of
5 eligibility for Options services in general, it's anybody
6 who is 60 or older---

7 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: Mm-hmm.

8 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: ---is a Pennsylvania
9 resident, a U.S. citizen, or a legal resident, and they
10 have unmet needs as determined by an assessment that's
11 conducted and they're not eligible for Medicaid long-term
12 services and support. So those would be, in general, the
13 individuals who would qualify for those services.

14 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: Okay. And the next
15 question then. What does the Department of Aging pay for
16 each of these four services? Do you know that?

17 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: I'm sorry; what's that?

18 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: What does the Department
19 of Aging or the AAAs pay for each of these four services?

20 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: I would have to get
21 back to you. I don't have that specific information.

22 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: Okay.

23 And then the last question, which you may not be
24 able to answer based on your earlier answer is, what is the
25 impact from the minimum wage increase on each of the four

1 services?

2 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Well, again, I don't
3 have a financial impact. I think what I want to share
4 with the Committee, and I had said it before, these are
5 individuals as far as individuals who are providing
6 direct-care work. These are very difficult jobs, and we
7 believe that they deserve a living wage. More importantly,
8 from a Department standpoint, we're concerned about quality
9 of care.

10 In terms of low wages, it creates a situation
11 where there's high turnover. I've seen averages, you know,
12 these employees in terms of the turnover rate, it runs
13 anywhere between 45 and 65 percent. So when you have that
14 kind of a high turnover, I think it causes concerns on
15 quality of care and stress on an individual who is seeing a
16 constant rotation of individuals that are trying to take
17 care of the needs of a senior.

18 I would also add, and I think this is important
19 to state as far as consideration on the minimum wage, is
20 that from the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, I have
21 information that 20 percent of Pennsylvania home-care
22 workers live below the Federal poverty line, and over
23 50 percent are below 200 percent of the Federal poverty
24 line. And over 45 percent of, again, Pennsylvania
25 home-care workers receive some form of public assistance.

1 So these are important considerations.

2 I have also learned that nearly 220 individuals
3 who are 55 and older are earning between below the minimum
4 wage and up to \$12 an hour, so they would benefit from a
5 raise in the minimum wage. So again, it's just important
6 information that should be part of this discussion.

7 DIRECTOR CELESKY: I want to go back. I wanted
8 to maybe clarify one of your previous questions that you
9 had.

10 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: Sure.

11 DIRECTOR CELESKY: You were asking the number of
12 people that receive certain services, like home-delivered
13 meals, the older adult day living. Was that your question
14 you were asking?

15 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: No. It was who
16 qualifies for the services.

17 DIRECTOR CELESKY: Who qualifies. Okay. I just
18 wanted to make sure. Thank you.

19 REPRESENTATIVE STRUZZI: That's okay. Thank you.
20 That's all the questions I have. Thanks.

21 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Thank you.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative Grove.

23 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Just to follow up, have you discussed the minimum
25 wage as far as the cost to the AAAs, because they'll have

1 to eventually pay it for the services. So if you increase
2 the cost, the AAAs will have less money to provide
3 services. Did you have a discussion with them about the
4 minimum wage?

5 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: I have not. I have
6 not, no.

7 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Okay.

8 The other question is, Governor Wolf did an
9 Executive order to increase minimum wage for State
10 employees. He exempted the contract. Obviously at any
11 time, you could build in a price increase at the contract
12 level. Have you pursued that?

13 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: We have not had those
14 discussions, no.

15 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Following up on my
16 questions last time that were around the \$27.9 million
17 Federal disallowance, one, what was the Department of
18 Aging's role in the development of the cost allocation
19 plan?

20 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: I'm going to turn that
21 over to our Finance Director so he can address your
22 question.

23 DIRECTOR CELESKY: Thank you very much.

24 The State agency was DHS, but we had a role in
25 part of it, because with them being the State agency, we

1 have to go through them to do that process. So it was in
2 conjunction with both the departments.

3 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Okay. They file it and
4 you have discussions with them?

5 DIRECTOR CELESKY: Yep. That is correct.

6 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Okay.

7 Was the Federal disallowance the result of the
8 AAAs, DHS, or Aging? Or a combination?

9 DIRECTOR CELESKY: Not the AAAs. It was more the
10 departments of what was going on through the audit finding,
11 yes.

12 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Okay.

13 DIRECTOR CELESKY: Yep.

14 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: And then, when you get a
15 chance, just shoot over the audit book.

16 DIRECTOR CELESKY: Yes. I will do that right
17 after we get back.

18 REPRESENTATIVE GROVE: Will do. Thank you.

19 And that's all I got.

20 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Representative
21 Bradford.

22 MINORITY CHAIRMAN BRADFORD: I actually think
23 that's all of our questions as well.

24 I just want to thank the Secretary and the entire
25 Administration for what I think has been a very insightful

1 3 weeks. But I would be remiss if I didn't begin just by
2 thanking Chairman Saylor, who has been a complete
3 gentleman, and his staff have been tremendous to work
4 through for the last several weeks. I can't thank him
5 enough for helping. As a first-time Chair and the first
6 time sitting through this, it has been an eventful
7 experience living through snow delays and everything else,
8 and they couldn't have been more kind.

9 I also want to thank my staff -- Miriam, Beth --
10 and all of our Members. You guys have been tremendous, so
11 I thank you. This is the hardy bunch that has waited until
12 the last minute of the last day, so I can't thank all of
13 them enough.

14 And again, I just want to thank everyone. I was
15 half kidding; we have talked so much about the minimum
16 wage, and I'm so appreciative of Chairman Saylor that I'm
17 going to offer him the minimum wage increase when we get
18 it.

19 But I do want to thank you all so much for
20 putting up with all of us. Thank you so much.

21 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Thank you,
22 Mr. Chairman.

23 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Mr. Secretary, you
24 know, with Pennsylvania's ever-increasing senior
25 population, I was very disturbed when I had the findings of

1 the recent Inspector General's report that indicated
2 reports of neglect and abuse, which were being investigated
3 in a timely manner.

4 Worse yet, the full report has not been made
5 public. And yes, I understand in the past a lot of the
6 Inspector reports have not been made public due to
7 personnel matters, but this is different, and I believe
8 this investigation needs to be released to the public, and
9 particularly to the General Assembly.

10 We are responsible for protecting older adults.
11 Your agency is as well. And I know you're new---

12 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Mm-hmm.

13 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: ---so you're not
14 necessarily responsible, and I'm not putting any blame on
15 you. But I believe that it's different here why this
16 should be released to at least the General Assembly, if not
17 the public, is we have State and Federal dollars involved
18 here and allocated to your department and others to take
19 care of our most vulnerable citizens. And I cannot think
20 of a reason why we as lawmakers should not have that report
21 as we evaluate programs or changes in the laws or funding
22 as we move forward.

23 So I'm asking you, when can I expect that report
24 here in the Appropriations Committee?

25 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Mr. Chairman, I

1 understand your concern, but that's really an issue for the
2 Office of State Inspector General.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: So you're suggesting I
4 will have to issue a subpoena for that? That you do not
5 have a copy of that report?

6 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: I'm not suggesting
7 that. I'm just saying that it's their procedure in terms
8 of, you know, they provided an Executive Summary and---

9 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: But are you in custody
10 of that report?

11 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Am I in custody of it?

12 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Do you at the
13 Department of Aging have that report in hand?

14 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: I have read it.

15 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: You have read it. So
16 you have it in hand at the Department?

17 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Only I have it.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Nobody else in your
19 department has read it?

20 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: No.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Well, I think that it
22 is incumbent on your agency to turn that over to the
23 Appropriations Chairs at least, if you're not going to make
24 it public, so that we can evaluate your budget and other
25 issues that may come forward, maybe changes in the law that

1 we on both sides of the aisle need to make.

2 Again, and this is not casting aspersions on you,
3 Mr. Secretary---

4 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Mm-hmm.

5 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: ---but I think, you
6 know, we are charged here fiduciarilly to protect our
7 seniors and other Pennsylvania citizens, and without that
8 report, I don't believe that we can do our jobs fairly.

9 This is not a personnel matter; this is a matter
10 of safety for our citizens of Pennsylvania. So I would
11 look forward to hearing and you sending that report over,
12 since you are in custody of that report, to the
13 Appropriations Chairs.

14 And with that, I will end this hearing. I will
15 again want to rephrase, or reiterate, I should say, thank
16 you to the Members and the staff of both sides of the aisle
17 for the great job they have done, and I look forward to
18 crafting a budget in a timely fashion.

19 Thank you.

20 ACTING SECRETARY TORRES: Thank you.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN SAYLOR: Mr. Torres, I look
22 forward to hearing from you.

23

24 (At 2:59 p.m., the budget hearing adjourned.)

1 I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings
2 are a true and accurate transcription produced from audio
3 on the said proceedings and that this is a correct
4 transcript of the same.

5
6
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