
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 286 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY BARTOLOTTA, MARTIN, J. WARD, STEFANO, MENSCH,
PHILLIPS-HILL, ARGALL, HUTCHINSON, REGAN, DiSANTO, PITTMAN,
DUSH, AUMENT AND MASTRIANO, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

REFERRED TO FINANCE, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

A JOINT RESOLUTION

1 Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth
2 of Pennsylvania, providing for spending limitations.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby resolves as follows:

5 Section 1. The following amendment to the Constitution of
6 Pennsylvania is proposed in accordance with Article XI:

7 That Article VIII be amended by adding a section to read:

8 § 18. Spending limitations.

9 (a) Except as provided in subsection (c), total spending by
10 the Commonwealth in a fiscal year shall not exceed the spending
11 appropriation limit as provided in this section.

12 (b) The spending appropriation limit for any fiscal year
13 shall be equal to total appropriations made during the
14 immediately prior fiscal year, adjusted by the lesser of:

15 (1) the average percentage change in personal income in this
16 Commonwealth for the three preceding years as reported by the
17 Federal Government or as determined pursuant to an act of the

1 General Assembly; or

2 (2) the average percentage change in inflation for the three
3 preceding years plus the average percentage change in the State
4 population for the three preceding years as reported by the
5 annual Federal census population estimates and adjusted every
6 decade to match the official Federal decennial census.

7 (c) The spending appropriation limit may be exceeded in any
8 fiscal year:

9 (1) to respond to a declared emergency, if the General
10 Assembly approves by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the
11 members elected to each House of the General Assembly; or

12 (2) in other situations if the Governor requests at least 30
13 days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year and the General
14 Assembly approves by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the
15 members elected to each House of the General Assembly.

16 (d) For purposes of this section:

17 (1) "Inflation" shall mean the percentage change in the
18 United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics,
19 Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, not seasonally
20 adjusted; all items index, or its successor index.

21 (2) "Total spending by the Commonwealth" shall mean the
22 total of the amounts approved as executive authorizations by the
23 Governor plus the total amounts of appropriations made by the
24 General Assembly, excluding appropriations made with money
25 received from the Federal Government.

26 Section 2. (a) Upon the first passage by the General
27 Assembly of this proposed constitutional amendment, the
28 Secretary of the Commonwealth shall proceed immediately to
29 comply with the advertising requirements of section 1 of Article
30 XI of the Constitution of Pennsylvania and shall transmit the

1 required advertisements to two newspapers in every county in
2 which such newspapers are published in sufficient time after
3 passage of this proposed constitutional amendment.

4 (b) Upon the second passage by the General Assembly of this
5 proposed constitutional amendment, the Secretary of the
6 Commonwealth shall proceed immediately to comply with the
7 advertising requirements of section 1 of Article XI of the
8 Constitution of Pennsylvania and shall transmit the required
9 advertisements to two newspapers in every county in which such
10 newspapers are published in sufficient time after passage of
11 this proposed constitutional amendment. The Secretary of the
12 Commonwealth shall submit this proposed constitutional amendment
13 as a single ballot question to the qualified electors of this
14 Commonwealth at the first primary, general or municipal election
15 which meets the requirements of and is in conformance with
16 section 1 of Article XI of the Constitution of Pennsylvania and
17 which occurs at least three months after the proposed
18 constitutional amendment is passed by the General Assembly.