

MCA
Summary of Legislation
December 2014

House and Senate Convene to Open New Session; Speaker-elect Turzai Announces House Committee Chairs for the 2015-16 Session

On January 6, the newly elected and returning members of the PA state House and Senate took the oath of office and kicked off the 2015-16 session, one that will have the interesting dynamic of both chambers of the General Assembly overwhelmingly controlled by Republicans, a Democrat Governor, and a Supreme Court with three vacancies to fill. Not to mention an Attorney General who may be facing criminal charges, and several sitting legislators under indictments as well.

203 Representatives and 50 Senators were sworn in, including 28 new House members and 5 new Senators. As was reported last month, new leaders were elected on the Republican side in both the House and Senate, as Dave Reed will fill the House Majority Leader spot held by Rep. Mike Turzai (R-Allegheny County) last session. Turzai was elected Speaker on January 6. Sen. Jake Corman unseated Delaware County Sen. Dominic Pileggi as Senate Majority Leader. It is rumored that Pileggi will seek a county judgeship this year.

Newly elected House Speaker Rep. Mike Turzai (R-Allegheny County) announced the appointments of both Republican and Democratic committee chairmen for the 2015-16 Legislative Session, which began with the taking of the oath of office on January 6.

House committees study each bill and determine which proposals will go to the full House. They conduct public hearings on key issues, allowing citizens and interested groups to have a say in the legislative process, and they serve as a resource for members and others.

The full rosters of the committees will be announced shortly.

Committees of interest to the construction industry include:

Labor and Industry:

- Republican: Rep. Mauree Gingrich, 101st Legislative District, Lebanon County.
- Democrat: Rep. Marc J. Gergely, 35th Legislative District, Allegheny County.

Local Government:

- Republican: Rep. Kate Harper, 61st Legislative District, Montgomery County.
- Democrat: Rep. Bob Freeman, 136th Legislative District, Northampton County.

Professional Licensure:

- Republican: Rep. Julie Harhart, 183rd Legislative District, Lehigh and Northampton counties.
- Democrat: Rep. Harry Readshaw, 36th Legislative District, Allegheny County.

State Government:

- Republican: Rep. Daryl Metcalfe, 12th Legislative District, Butler County.
- Democrat: Rep. Mark Cohen, 202nd Legislative District, Philadelphia County.

Transportation:

- Republican: Rep. John Taylor, 177th Legislative District, Philadelphia County.
- Democrat: Rep. William F. Keller, 184th Legislative District, Philadelphia.

Wolf Administration Names Cortes Secretary of Commonwealth, Smyler General Counsel; Many More Appointments to Follow

Pedro Cortes has been named Secretary of the Commonwealth, returning to the post he held for seven years under Gov. Ed Rendell. Wolf also named **Denise Smyler**, a Philadelphia lawyer, as his General Counsel. Cortes, a native of Puerto Rico who was the first Latino confirmed to the governor's Cabinet in Pennsylvania when he served under Rendell, is the longest-serving Secretary of the Commonwealth, according to Wolf's transition team. Smyler was an assistant Philadelphia District Attorney from 1987-1993, working for both former Republican Chief Justice Ron Castille when he was DA, and also long-time DA Lynne Abraham, a Democrat (and currently a Philadelphia mayoral candidate). Smyler was the first woman to serve as counsel to the Philadelphia Police Department and for 16 years has led a law firm that concentrates on municipal finance and civil defense.

These two appointments follow earlier announcements that two of Wolf's primary opponents, Katie McGinty and John Hanger, were tapped for top administration positions, and campaign guru Mary Isenhour would serve as Wolf's Legislative Secretary. In addition, Wolf has announced that Allegheny Countian Dennis Davin would be his choice to lead the Department of Community and Economic Development, and Eileen McNulty would serve as Revenue Secretary. These appointments are subject to Senate confirmation.

Legislative Activity

NO bills of interest to the construction industry were acted on by the General Assembly this past month. The House and Senate adjourned the 2013-14 session "sine die" on November 30. The new General Assembly will take the oath of office on Tuesday, January 6. Gov.-Elect Wolf will be sworn in on January 20, 2015.

The following cosponsorship memos have been circulated.

HCO 193 (Godshall)- Establishes water well construction standards in Pennsylvania.
Filed, 12/17/2014

[HCO 194](#) (Harper) - Provides for water well construction standards in Pennsylvania.
Filed, 12/17/2014

[HCO 196](#) (Harper) - Requires the design, construction, and renovation of state-owned or leased buildings to comply with specified and high-performance building standards.
Filed, 12/17/2014

[HCO 244](#) (Delozier) - Prohibits a government agency that intends to enter into a public works contract from preparing contract specifications that are exclusionary or discriminatory by specifying or limiting to specific brand names.
Filed, 12/18/2014

[SCO 392](#) (Folmer) - Updates the registered apprenticeship program in Pennsylvania.
Filed, 12/17/2014

[SCO 440](#) (Farnese) - Prohibits a mechanics lien if the contractor work does not meet the building, electrical or other safety code standards of the municipality in which the work is being done.
Filed, 12/22/2014

2015 SENATE SESSION SCHEDULE

January	6, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28
February	2, 3, 4, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25
March	2, 3, 4
April	13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22
May	4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13
June	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30

2015 HOUSE SESSION SCHEDULE

January	6, 14 (NV), 20, 21, 26, 27, 28
February	2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 23, 24, 25
March	2, 3, 4, 30, 31
April	1, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22
May	4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13
June	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

Copies of all bills of interest can be accessed via the Internet at:

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/session.cfm>