

Senate News Brief

from Senate Republicans

"We have serious challenges facing us: the budget, transportation, job creation, healthcare, and others. And quite frankly those are not party issues; they are issues that all of us face every day. While we may not all agree on the avenues to take in addressing these issues, we cannot be delayed by our differences, and must be determined in finding results."

– **Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati (R-Jefferson)**, addressing the Senate upon being elected to post on January 2.

Preview

SENATE LEADING THE WAY ON REFORM AGENDA

THE PENNSYLVANIA SENATE, led by the Senate Republican Caucus, has been out front on reforming state government. In addition to a new set of rules adopted on Jan. 2 which will make the Senate's own process more open to the public, Senate Republicans are looking at a variety of measures to make integrity and fiscal responsibility the cornerstones of state government. Proposals to do this will be unveiled in the coming weeks and months.

Review

SENATOR SCARNATI ELECTED SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

THE SENATE opened the 2007-08 legislative session Jan. 2 with a swearing-in ceremony and election of a new Senate President Pro Tempore.

Fifteen members of the Senate Republican Caucus took the oath of office, including five new members. *(Please see article below.)*

Sen. Joe Scarnati (R-Jefferson) was elected Senate President Pro Tempore. The President Pro Tempore is responsible for appointing the chairpersons and members of the standing committees of the Senate, and plays a significant role in negotiations with the Administration and House of Representatives regarding legislation and policy.

A native of Brockway in Jefferson County and a graduate of Penn State University at DuBois, Senator Scarnati was a third-generation business owner in the Brockway area. He began his public service with his election to the Brockway Borough Council and was elected to the state Senate in 2000.

NEW SENATE GOP LEADERSHIP IN PLACE FOR 2007-08

IN ADDITION TO A NEW SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE, Senate Republicans begin the legislative session with a new leadership team.

Sen. Dominic Pileggi (R-Delaware) was elected by Senate Republican colleagues to serve as Senate Majority Leader for the 2007-08 legislative session. The second-highest ranking position in Senate leadership, Majority Leader duties include setting the legislative agenda, developing policies and strategies for the Senate Republican Caucus, and leading debates on the Senate floor. He will also play a major role in negotiating issues with the Administration and House of Representatives. Senator Pileggi previously served as Chairman of the Senate Housing and Urban Affairs Committee.

Rounding out the Senate Republican leadership are: **Majority Whip Jane Orié (R-Allegheny)**, **Appropriations Committee Chairman Gib Armstrong (R-Lancaster)**, **Majority Caucus Chairman Mike Waugh (R-York)**, **Majority Caucus Secretary Bob Robbins (R-Mercer)**, **Majority Policy Committee Chairman Jake Corman (R-Centre)**, and **Majority Caucus Administrator Terry Punt (R-Adams)**.

SENATE ADOPTS REFORM MEASURES TO MAKE SENATE PROCESS MORE OPEN

FOLLOWING THE ADMINISTERING OF THE OATH-OF-OFFICE TO MEMBERS, the Senate's first official act of the 2007-08 legislative session was adopting seven reform proposals designed to make the legislative process more open to the public.

The rules changes were developed with bipartisan input and are the first step in a push for greater transparency in the Senate. They will help ensure that business is conducted at reasonable hours, with more advance notice for members to consider amended bills. In addition, text of the debates and the votes themselves will be available for public inspection on the Internet. *For details, please see [In the Spotlight](#), below.*

FIVE NEW GOP SENATORS SWORN IN TO OFFICE

SEN. LISA BAKER (R-LUZERNE) – Prior to being elected to the Senate from the 20th Senatorial District, Senator Baker held several state government positions and was active in health and wellness initiatives in northeastern and north central Pennsylvania. Senator Baker will chair the Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee.

Sen. Mike Brubaker (R-Lancaster) – Senator Brubaker owned and operated several successful businesses focusing on agriculture and the environment prior to joining the Senate representing the 36th Senatorial District. Senator Brubaker has been named Chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee.

Sen. John Eichelberger (R-Blair) – A resident of Blair Township, Senator Eichelberger served three terms as a Blair County Commissioner before being elected to represent the 30th Senatorial District. Senator Eichelberger is Vice-Chairman of the Senate Local Government Committee.

Sen. Mike Folmer (R-Lebanon) – A lifelong resident of Lebanon and a graduate of Grace College, Senator Folmer has worked as a small businessman and financial consultant and served on Lebanon City Council. Representing the 48th Senatorial District, Senator Folmer is Vice-Chairman of the Senate State Government Committee.

Sen. Chuck McIlhinney (R-Bucks) – A member of the House of Representatives from 1998 to 2006, Senator McIlhinney previously also served as a director at the Bucks County Office of Employment and Training and a Doylestown Borough Councilman. Representing the 10th Senatorial District, Senator McIlhinney was appointed Chairman of the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee.

In the Spotlight

THE NEW OPERATING RULES adopted by the Senate are designed to make the legislative process more open to the public and allow a fuller debate on important issues

Session times will be limited to between 8 a.m. and 11 p.m. The Senate will wait at least six hours before voting on an amended bill or a conference committee report, and amendments will be posted to the Internet before being offered on the Senate floor.

All roll call votes will be posted on the Internet immediately (always within 24 hours of the vote) and committee votes on bills will be posted on the Internet within 48 hours of the vote.

The Senate's *Legislative Journal*, which includes the full text of all floor debates, will be posted on the Internet upon Senate approval of the Journal or within 45 days, whichever is earlier. Finally, an updated fiscal note will be prepared if a bill is amended after consideration by the Senate Appropriations Committee, if the amendment has a fiscal impact.

Fast Facts

2007-08 SENATE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Aging & Youth: **Sen. Patricia Vance (R-Cumberland)**

Agriculture & Rural Affairs: **Sen. Mike Brubaker (R-Lancaster)**

Appropriations: **Sen. Gib Armstrong (R-Lancaster)**

Banking & Insurance: **Sen. Don White (R-Indiana)**

Communications & Technology: **Sen. Rob Wonderling (R-Montgomery)**

Community, Economic & Recreational Development: **Sen. Jane Earll (R-Erie)**

Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure: **Sen. Tommy Tomlinson (R-Bucks)**

Education: **Sen. James Rhoades (R-Schuylkill)**

Environmental Resources & Energy: **Sen. Mary Jo White (R-Venango)**

Finance: **Sen. Pat Browne (R-Lehigh)**

Game & Fisheries: **Sen. Chuck McIlhinney (R-Bucks)**

Judiciary: **Sen. Stewart Greenleaf (R-Montgomery)**

Labor & Industry: **Sen. John Gordner (R-Columbia)**

Law & Justice: **Sen. John Rafferty (R-Montgomery)**

Local Government: **Sen. Bob Regola (R-Westmoreland)**

Public Health & Welfare: **Sen. Ted Erickson (R-Delaware)**

Rules & Executive Nominations: **Sen. Dominic Pileggi (R-Delaware)**

State Government: **Sen. Jeffrey Piccola (R-Dauphin)**

Transportation: **Sen. Roger Madigan (R-Bradford)**

Urban Affairs & Housing: **Sen. John Pippy (R-Allegheny)**

Question or comments? Contact the Senate Republican Communications Office at senaterepublicancommunicationsoffice@pasen.gov or call 717-787-6725. Current and archived News Briefs are also available online at www.pasenategov.com.