

Senate News Brief

from Senate Republicans

"If there are ideas out there for the state to be more efficient with money, or things we can do better, we're willing to listen. Our door is always open to anyone with ideas to save some dollars."

– **Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Gib Armstrong (R-Lancaster)** opening the final public hearing on the proposed 2007-08 state budget on Wednesday.

Preview

HEARINGS SET ON TRANSPORTATION, BEER SALES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

ON TUESDAY, the Senate Transportation Committee, chaired by **Sen. Roger Madigan (R-Bradford)**, will hold a public hearing on public-private transportation initiatives, and the Senate Law and Justice Committee, chaired by **Sen. John Rafferty (R-Montgomery)**, will hold a hearing on beer sales in supermarkets and convenience stores. On Wednesday, the Senate Local Government Committee, chaired by **Sen. Bob Regola (R-Westmoreland)**, and its House counterpart will hold a joint public hearing on the state of Pennsylvania's local governments.

Review

SENATE HOLDS FINAL PUBLIC HEARING ON STATE BUDGET

THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, chaired by **Sen. Gib Armstrong (R-Lancaster)**, held its final public hearing on the proposed 2007-08 state budget Wednesday.

The special hearing was an opportunity for research and advocacy groups from across the political spectrum to offer opinions about the administration's proposed state budget, the taxes and borrowing it has recommended, and other facets of state finances.

The governor's \$27.2 billion spending plan includes more than \$2.5 billion in increased taxes. [For a list of new debt proposed by the governor, please see *Fast Facts*, below.](#)

SENATE ACTS TO BOOST SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, INCREASE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

THE SENATE LAST WEEK PASSED FOUR BILLS sponsored by **Senate Education Committee Chairman James Rhoades (R-Schuylkill)** designed to assist school districts fulfill the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Senate Bill 154 identifies continuing professional education options for teachers to help students in underperforming schools. Senate Bill 155 would require the Department of Education to provide technical assistance to schools identified as needing improvement.

Senate Bill 157 directs intermediate units to coordinate academic improvement programs for school districts with schools on the state warning list. In addition, the legislation establishes academic improvement teams for school districts needing additional assistance. Senate Bill 158 directs school districts to create parent involvement programs, policies and committees. In addition, the legislation would direct the Department of Education to establish a clearinghouse of information related to strategies, resources and materials that can be used as part of parent involvement programs and policies. The measures now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

COMMITTEE APPROVES SEN. CORMAN'S LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE INCENTIVE

THE SENATE BANKING AND INSURANCE COMMITTEE, chaired by **Sen. Don White (R-Indiana)**, approved legislation Tuesday that would provide a strong financial incentive for people to invest in long-term care insurance.

Senate Bill 548, sponsored by **Sen. Jake Corman (R-Centre)**, would create the Long-Term Care (LTC) Partnership Program, which would provide a financial incentive for individuals to buy LTC insurance. The measure is intended to give people the opportunity to protect their personal assets by buying the insurance.

Currently, individuals have to spend down their assets before Medicaid steps in to cover the costs of long-term care. By divesting themselves of their assets before going into long-term care, Medicaid often ends up footing the entire bill. Under the

