

Clean Team Workforce November Employee of the Month

By Stefanie Appel

(ALLENTOWN, PA) – The Clean Team Workforce congratulates its Employee of the Month for November, Antoine T. Antoine T. came to the Allentown Rescue Mission in 2014 after an argument with his girlfriend's family left him on the street with nowhere to go.

At the Mission, Antoine graduated from the Transformation Program, which made him eligible to work for the Clean Team Workforce. He

worked for the Clean Team Workforce for several months and successfully transitioned to a job outside of the Mission. Recently, Antoine was laid off from his job.

Thankfully, the Clean Team Workforce provides a life-time safety net to help good-standing, former employees who find themselves without a job. For the second time, Antoine could return to the Clean Team Workforce and immediately begin working to earn money and maintain his lifestyle. When Antoine re-

turned to the Clean Team Workforce in September, he became instrumental in relocating the Clean Team Workforce tools and equipment to a new garage.

The move took approximately one month to complete, and Antoine ensured it was finished on time. He will tell anyone, "I want to do the hardest work there is!" He thrives on the hardest manual labor that the Clean Team Workforce has to offer. Today, Antoine is a crew leader and driver.

His crew is assigned to a recycling facility where they work full-time. He is saving money and hopes to gain permanent employment with the recycling company. He is doing a great job so far, and the Clean Team Workforce wishes him the best for his future.



Balancing Priorities: Enacting the 2025–2026 State Budget

By Senator Rosemary Brown

The Pennsylvania General Assembly has enacted a \$50.09 billion General Fund budget for the 2025–2026 fiscal year. While this is a larger overall budget number than I would have preferred, the final agreement came in \$1.4 billion below the Governor's original proposal, reflecting a willingness to compromise and an effort to keep expenditures more closely aligned with revenue projections.

As I've said consistently, our state budget should not exceed our state revenue. Spending more than we bring in may set the stage for future tax increases and fiscal instability. Unfortunately, our cost to carry budget is approximately \$49 billion, which reflects a need for stronger reforms as we move forward. To help offset this cost to carry number and current state revenues, the Senate conducted a line-by-line review of agency budgets, identifying lapsed and unused funds that could be responsibly redirected to prevent deeper financial strain. Importantly, this measure preserves the state's Rainy Day Fund. You can read more about the importance of this fund here.

That said, we must focus on growing Pennsylvania's economy. Without expanded economic activity — through job creation, business development, and population retention — the burden on taxpayers will continue to grow. Economic growth is not only the foundation for a balanced budget, but it's also essential to expanding opportunity, attracting investment, and maintaining the quality of services Pennsylvanians depend on.

One major policy shift in this budget is the formal withdrawal from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) — a program enacted via executive order, never approved by the legislature, and recently struck down by the Commonwealth Court as an unconstitutional energy tax.

RGGI was projected to increase electricity prices by up to 30 percent, placing an unsustainable burden on working families and creating deep uncertainty for the energy sector and businesses. Rescinding Pennsylvania's participation in RGGI restores predictability, protects ratepayers, and reopens the door to energy investment and job creation and creates certainty.

Another key advancement is the reform of Pennsylvania's complex and burdensome permitting process, which currently includes over 164,000 regulatory restrictions. These reforms will expand expedited permitting across agencies, implement online tracking systems, and automatically approve permits when agencies fail to meet deadlines. Cutting red tape and improving transparency are essential steps toward creating a more business-friendly environment. These changes will help spur investment, reduce project delays, and support local job creation — further reinforcing our goal of long-term economic health.

AI and Children: Legislation to Keep Our Kids Safe

By Senator Rosemary Brown

The Senate approved legislation to better protect young people against the increased threats posed by child sexual abuse materials (CSAM) generated using artificial intelligence (AI).

Senate Bill 1050 would require all individuals classified as mandated reporters to notify authorities of all instances of CSAM they become aware of, including those produced by a minor. A mandated reporter includes teachers, child-care workers, health care providers and others responsible for caring for children. The bill was sent to the House of Representatives for consideration.

The Senate previously passed key legislation to combat the issue of sexually explicit materials created through AI by passing Act 125 of 2024 and Act 35 of 2025, which addressed deepfakes and sexual deepfakes.

In addition, Senate Bill 1090, the Safeguarding Adolescents from Exploitative Chatbots and Harmful AI Technology (SAFECHAT) Act, was approved by the Senate Communications and Technology Committee.

