



Balancing Priorities: Enacting the 2025–2026 State Budget

By U.S. Senator Dave McCormick

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 U.S. Senator Dave McCormick

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, childcare 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.



RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Residential and Commercial Façade Improvement Programs are designed to help improve the exterior appearance and condition of residential and commercial properties within the four boroughs. The program’s goals are to maintain historical and architectural integrity, improve neighborhood appearance, and help property owners make exterior repairs to their homes or businesses while increasing property values for all borough residents.



ABOUT SLATE BELT RISING

Slate Belt Rising is a neighborhood revitalization initiative designed to integrate and capitalize on the substantial assets of the individual Slate Belt boroughs of Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, Bangor, and Portland. While Slate Belt Rising specifically targets these four boroughs, some initiatives promote development and coordination of services throughout the entire region.

More information is available on our website under the Services tab, including program guidelines and applications Visit slatebeltrising.org.

PROGRAM OF COMMUNITY ACTION

Community Action Lehigh Valley is an anti-poverty non-profit offering programs and services in Advocacy, Business Start-Up and Development, Food Access and Nutrition, Housing, Neighborhood Revitalization, and Youth.



Contact Brian Fenstermaker at bfenstermaker@caclv.org or 484-523-0900 with any questions.



Affordable Housing Available

2 and 3 Bedroom Duplex Units Available For Purchase

Warren County Habitat for Humanity
Franklin Township Phase 2 Project
2537 Route 57
Franklin Township, NJ
Call 908-835-1300, ext. 10



Conceptual Rendering

Purchase Price Ranges
From \$129,826 to \$168,858 for a 2-Bedroom (1,257sf)
&
From \$151,590 to \$197,025 for a 3-Bedroom (1,455sf)
(anticipated occupancy early-mid 2026)

Maximum Income Limits

# Persons	2	3	4	5	6
Moderate Income (2-180% & 1-200% available)	\$82,836	\$93,180	\$103,533	\$113,816	\$129,008
Low Income (0-120% & 1-130% available)	\$51,766	\$58,897	\$64,708	\$69,885	\$75,061

PRELIMINARY APPLICATIONS CAN BE REQUESTED BY CALLING (908-835-1300 EXT.10), OR PROVIDE YOUR NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS TO US AT:
WARREN COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
31 BELVIDERE AVENUE
WASHINGTON, NJ 07882
office@habitatwcnj.org

VISIT www.NJHRC.gov FOR MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES
APPLICATIONS WILL BE RECEIVED UNTIL JUNE 13, 2025
(Mortgage Application Fee is \$20)
Lottery will be held at our office on JUNE 17, 2025 at 4:00PM

