

# Connections

## Utility Rates Bill Moves Thru House

As reported by the Morning Call, a bill is moving through the state legislature that would no longer require utility companies to hold public hearings and take other lengthy steps to increase rates. Proponents of the measure say it is necessary to upgrade aging infrastructure. Supporters of the bill say aging infrastructure need to be replaced to avoid accidents and gas line explosions. Those against the bill are worried that rate hikes will occur without proper deliberation. The bill, HB 1294, passed the House and is now in consideration in the Senate, with possible final passage by the end of the year.

## President To Visit Scranton This Week

This Wednesday President Obama is scheduled to visit Scranton, PA to interact with voters. In the state where Obama had a 10.4% victory over McCain in 2008, recent polls have shown a low approval rating for the President. The most recent poll released by Public Policy Polling showed a 42% approval and 53% disapproval for job performance. Less than 5 months ago, he had a 46% approval and 48% disapproval. And according to The Times Tribune, Obama must win Pennsylvania to win his re-election.

## DPW Works To Streamline Department

Today the Patriot News printed an op-ed by PA Secretary of Public Welfare Gary Alexander. The Secretary wrote about how he received a state welfare system that was in great need of fiscal repair, saying that by 2016, DPW would consume 50% of the state's budget. Under the Corbett Administration, he has worked, and continues to work, on reining in spending and reserving resources for those in greatest need and saving taxpayers' money. DPW most recently removed 100,000 ineligible individuals who were receiving services. He goes on to report that DPW is working with the Inspector General to use investigators to audit providers and enhance collection efforts. He also said he has launched an aggressive program integrity initiative to help reduce fraud and close the \$1 billion budget gap in the department.

## Charges Dropped For GOP Aide

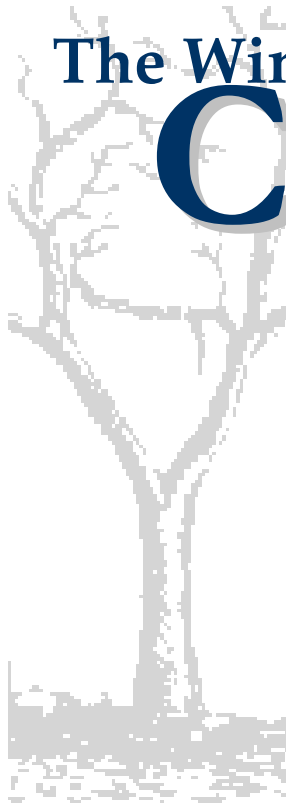
Today the Philadelphia Inquirer reports that prosecutors have dropped charges against former House aide John Zimmerman in connection with House GOP caucus staff using money to fund campaign work. Nine Republicans have pled guilty or have been convicted and 15 Democrats have been charged.

The following members have announced they will not be seeking reelection in 2012:

- Rep. Curt Schroder (R-Chester)
- Sen. Jeff Piccola (R-Dauphin)
- Rep. Ed Staback (D-Lackawanna)
- Rep. John Evans (R-Erie)
- Rep. Scott Boyd (R-Lancaster)

NOTE: Representatives Kenyatta Johnson (D-Philadelphia), Dennis O'Brien (R-Philadelphia), Jewell Williams (D-Philadelphia), Josh Shapiro (D-Montgomery), Doug Reichley (R-Lehigh), and Chelsa Wagner (D-Allegheny) won elections in the November 2011 election and thus will be leaving the House before the 2012 election

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**Legislative Session Days 2011**

<p>2011 HOUSE SESSION SCHEDULE                  December 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14                  January 3 (non-voting), 17, 18, 23, 24, 25                  February 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15                  March 12, 13, 14, 26, 27, 28                  April 2, 3, 4, 30                  May 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 21, 22, 23                  June 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29</p>	<p>2011 SENATE SESSION SCHEDULE                  December 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14</p>
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\*\* Budget Hearings in the House: February 13, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29 and March 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Committee Calendar**

**MONDAY - 11/28/11**

House Democratic Policy Committee  
 2:00 p.m., Room 110 AB, PA Convention Center, 1101 Arch Street, Philadelphia  
 Public hearing on PA transportation issues

**TUESDAY - 11/29/11**

House Democratic Policy Committee  
 10:00 a.m., Room 110 AB, PA Convention Center, 1101 Arch Street, Philadelphia  
 Public hearing on jobs

House Insurance

1:00 p.m., Room 140 Main Capitol  
 Public hearing on: HB 1763 Miccarelli Act re physician contracts with health insurer

**WEDNESDAY - 11/30/11**

House Insurance

9:30 a.m., Room 140 Main Capitol  
 Public hearing on: HB 1551 Cutler Act re physician credentialing by health ins.

Senate Banking and Insurance

11:00 a.m., University of Pittsburgh, William Pitt Union Ballroom, 4200 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh  
 Public hearing to accept testimony regarding the ongoing contractual dispute between Highmark and UPMC, and Highmark's acquisition of West Penn Allegheny Hospital

House Liquor Control

12:00 p.m., PA Convention Center, Room 201 (A, B, C), 12th and Arch Streets, Philadelphia  
 Public hearing on: HB 11 Turzai Amends Liquor Code re LCB privatization

**THURSDAY - 12/1/11**

House Liquor Control

10:00 a.m., PA Convention Center, Room 201 (A, B, C), 12th and Arch Streets, Philadelphia  
 Public hearing on: HB 11 Turzai Amends Liquor Code re LCB privatization

**MONDAY - 12/5/11**

House Health

11:00 a.m., Room 205, Ryan Office Building  
 To consider: SB 349 Browne Act re regulation of indoor tanning facilities HB 1960 Vulakovich Amends Prescribed Pediatric Ext. Care Ctrs Act

House Labor and Industry

11:00 a.m., Room B31 Main Capitol  
 To consider: HB 1820 Delozier Amends Minimum Wage Act re exemptions SB 1310 Gordner Amends Unemployment Compensation Law

**TUESDAY - 12/6/11**

House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness

9:15 a.m., Room B31 Main Capitol  
 To consider: HB 1701 Cutler Amends Admin. Code re State Geospatial Council HR 315 Causer Resolution re LBFC study emergency med. system

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## Senate Banking and Insurance

10:00 a.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Building

Public hearing to receive testimony on: SB 1339 White, D Amends Title 75 re financial responsibility

## Senate Urban Affairs and Housing

11:30 a.m., Room 461 Main Capitol

To consider: SB 1302 Williams, A. Amends Phila City-County Consolidation Act

## WEDNESDAY - 12/7/11

## Senate Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness

9:00 a.m., Hearing Room 1, North Office Building

Hearing on re-write of Title 35

## Senate Communications and Technology

9:30 a.m., Room 8E-A, East Wing

Public hearing to review the OIT Strategic Plan

## THURSDAY - 12/8/11

House Local Government, House Urban Affairs, Senate Community, Economic, and Recreational Development, Senate Local Government

9:00 a.m., Room 140 Main Capitol

Joint Public Hearing on Act 47 of 1987, Municipalities Planning Code

## House Tourism and Recreational Development

9:30 a.m., Room 60, East Wing

Public hearing on: HB 137 Godshall Amends Public School Code re terms & sessions

## House Consumer Affairs

10:00 a.m., Room G-50, Irvis Office Building

Public hearing on: HB 1580 Ross Amends Alt. Energy Portfolio Standards Act

## MONDAY - 12/12/11

## Joint Legislative Conservation Committee

12:00 p.m., Room G-50, Irvis Office Building

Environmental Issues Forum with Nate Fice, program manager of the Pennsylvania Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), will offer a presentation on the SFI program - its history, current projects, benefits and its relationship with the national SFI program.

## TUESDAY - 12/13/11

## House Liquor Control

9:00 a.m., Room G-50, Irvis Office Building

To consider: HB 11 Turzai Amends Liquor Code re PLCB privatization

## WEDNESDAY - 12/14/11

## House Game and Fisheries

9:30 a.m., Room 205, Ryan Office Building

Agenda to be announced

## THURSDAY - 12/15/11

## Independent Regulatory Review Commission

10:00 a.m., 333 Market Street, 14th Floor Conference Room, Harrisburg

To consider: 2795 State Board of Dentistry #16A-4616: EFDA Program Approval 2918 Department of Transportation #18- 426: Intrastate Motor Carrier Safety Requirements (Final-Omit)