

Advocacy for Psychologists: How Legislative Advocacy Makes a Difference

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What I do for PPA - Tanya

- Volunteer position
- Lead the Legislative and Governmental Affairs Committee (LGAC)
 - Review and make decisions on all pieces of legislation that are relevant to psychology
 - Provide input on language of specific bills
 - Advocates for PPA's policy priorities
- Participate in local advocacy and APA Advocacy Days
- Assist with trainings on advocacy and understanding the political process in Pennsylvania

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What I do for PPA - Rachael

- State Advocacy
- Federal Advocacy
- Attend State Board of Psychology Meetings
- Attend other Agency Meetings
- Advocate with Insurers
- Participate in Coalitions

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PENNSYLVANIA GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

Three branches of Government in PA

EXECUTIVE



LEGISLATIVE



JUDICIAL



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EXECUTIVE BRANCH

- Pennsylvania's Governor is Josh Shapiro; he is a Democrat from Montgomery County. This is in his 1st four-year term.
- The Governor has a cabinet of Department Secretaries that move his agenda forward



Secretary of Health

Secretary of Dept. of Human Services

Secretary of Labor & Industry

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GOVERNMENT AGENCIES/DEPARTMENTS

- ▶ PA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 - ▶ BUREAU OF OCCUPATIONAL AFFAIRS
 - ▶ STATE BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY
- ▶ DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
 - ▶ DPW
 - ▶ MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
- ▶ INSURANCE DEPARTMENT

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LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Pennsylvania's Legislative Branch is Comprised of the PA House and PA Senate



PA General Assembly



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LEGISLATIVE BRANCH (cont'd)

- There are 253 members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly
- 203 House members and 50 Senators
- Small majority held by democrats in the House (102-100) and a larger republican majority in the Senate (27-23)

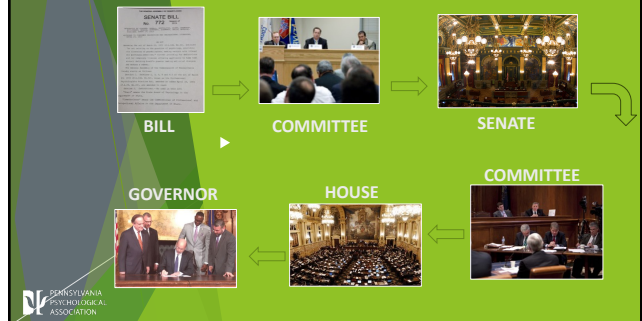
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JUDICIAL BRANCH

- ▶ ALL COURTS OF PENNSYLVANIA (TRIAL, APPELLATE, SUPREME)
- ▶ SUPREME COURT RULES
- ▶ AMICUS CURIE

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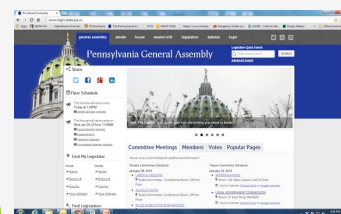
THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



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NAVIGATING WWW.LEGIS.STATE.PA.US

- ▶ The website for the PA General Assembly is www.legis.state.pa.us.



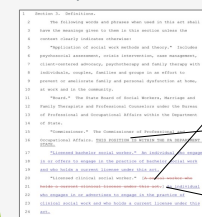
Find a bill here. You must search using HB # or SB #.

Search here for your legislator. You can search using your address or county.

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READING A BILL

- ▶ Reading a bill can be tough, but cracking the code is the key.



Arrows in the right-hand margin of a bill marks are where changes need to be made.

A strikethrough indicates material that should be deleted from the bill.

CAPITAL LETTERS and underscoring indicate material to be added to the current version of the bill.

Light face brackets indicate material to be omitted from the Act.

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the bill box Information on the Pennsylvania Professional Licensure Committee for Psychologists Act of December 2025

Bill Number	Brief Description	Introduced By	PPA Position	Movement in Senate	Movement in House	Governor's Action
HB 2002	An act authorizing the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to join the Interstate Compact for School Psychologists, providing for form of compact, and imposing additional powers and duties on the governor, the secretary of the Commonwealth and the Compact.	Representative Manuel Guzman	Support	Referred to House Professional Licensure Committee, October 29, 2025		
HB 1000	An act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (PL 30, No. 14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, relating to public school employees, by adding the definition and providing for certain definitions.	Representative David P. Loefer	Support		Laid on the Table, February 4, 2026	
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HB 2152	An act amending the act of March 10, 1949 (PL 30, No. 14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, in school safety and security, further providing for School Safety and Security Grant Program; and, in terms and course of study, providing for secondary school start times.	Representative Jill Cooper	Support		Laid on the Table, February 4, 2026	
HR 273	A resolution urging school districts to adopt later secondary school start times.	Representative Jill Cooper	Support		Referred to Education, June 25, 2025	

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WHAT ARE WE ADVOCATING FOR/AGAINST THIS SESSION?

State Level

- ▶ HB 1000/SB 1243- Prescription Privileges for Psychologists
- ▶ HB 2100/HB1993 - Regulating AI in mental health services
- ▶ HB 2152- Delayed School Start Times
- ▶ In process of drafting legislation that would create licensure for psychological associates (a license for interns/post-doctoral students) that would allow reimbursement for psychology students who are completing their internship/post-doctoral experience

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WHAT ARE WE ADVOCATING FOR/AGAINST THIS SESSION?

Federal Level

- ▶ CMS Reimbursement for Telehealth Services
- ▶ CMS Reimbursement
- ▶ Funding for Students
- ▶ NIH Funding
- ▶ Parity Regulations

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HB 1000/SB 1243 RxP Bills

- ▶ HB 1000 introduced by Representative Frankel
 - ▶ Currently in House Professional Licensure Committee
- ▶ SB 1243 introduced by Senator Yaw
 - ▶ Currently in the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee

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HB 2100 and HB 1993 Regulating AI for Mental Health Services

- ▶ HB 2100 focuses on the regulating the use of chatbots for providing mental health services
- ▶ HB 1993 focuses on other ways AI can be used when providing mental health services

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Start School Later HB 2152

- ▶ HB 2152 would provide school districts with a grant if they change school start times by at least 15 minutes

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Psychological Associate License- (interns/post-doctoral students)

- ▶ In process of drafting legislation that would create licensure for psychological associates (a license for interns/post-doctoral students) that would allow reimbursement for psychology students who are completing their internship/post-doctoral experience
- ▶ We have the draft language and are working with the House Professional Licensure Committee to get the legislation introduced

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HOW DOES PPA LOBBY AND ADVOCATE FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS?



- ▶ In the past, PPA has employed a building block strategy.
- ▶ Every legislative session, we aim to introduce one or two bills which allow psychologists to practice in areas which were once reserved for physicians.
- ▶ We focus on tangible goals which we can achieve, rather than platitudes.

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ROLES YOU CAN PLAY IN POLICY AND POLITICAL ADVOCACY

• Dialogue with your legislator

- Schedule time to visit the district office of your state Rep./State Sen.
- Inform him/her about issues that affect you as a psychologist.
- Tougher to say "no" to someone with whom you have a relationship.



• Educate the public about:

- Issues important to the psychology profession and mental health practice.
- Write articles/Op-eds/letters to the editor about psychology.

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PPA's Advocacy Strategy

- ▶ Direct Lobbying
- ▶ Grassroots Engagement
- ▶ Political Giving
- ▶ Coalition Engagement

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Direct Lobbying

- ▶ Professional advocates engaging directly with officials to encourage them to adopt, change or oppose a policy position
- ▶ Our Lobbying Firm is Saxton & Stump (Bill Ryan and Jonathan Berger)

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Grassroots Engagement

- ▶ Organizing stakeholders for them to encourage their officials to adopt or oppose a policy position
- ▶ PPA promotes grassroots engagement in the following ways:
 - ▶ Action Alerts
 - ▶ Lobby Days
 - ▶ Joining PPA Committees
 - ▶ Press Conferences
 - ▶ Having PPA members attend legislative hearings
 - ▶ Serving on legislative committees

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Why Grassroots Engagement is Important?

- ▶ Demonstrates widespread support for your issue
- ▶ Puts pressure on legislators to act in response to voter demands
- ▶ Empowers individuals to participate in the democratic process

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Objectives of Grassroots Engagement

- ▶ Turning up the volume- Elevate an issue by generating a lot of entries in the issue tallies officials keep of their constituents' communications
- ▶ Generating Stories- Humanize an issue with a flow of anecdotes, testimonials, etc. showing policies on the ground effect
- ▶ Elevating Diverse Voices- Expose officials to a broader range of perspectives on an issue; perspectives they may not otherwise have exposure to.

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Political Giving

- ▶ Fundraising to support campaigns of candidates who champion issues relevant to your mission, typically through a political action committee (PAC)
- ▶ PPA has a PAC and it is called PennPsyPAC.
- ▶ PennPsyPAC donates to legislators who are the prime sponsors of our bills or to legislators that serve on key committees where our bills go (Professional Licensure Committee, Health Committee etc.)

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Coalition Engagement

- ▶ Partnering with like-minded organizations to elevate diverse voices on an issue
- ▶ PPA belongs to several coalitions including the Alliance of Health Care Providers and the PA Provider Advocacy Coalition

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ROLES YOU CAN PLAY IN POLICY AND POLITICAL ADVOCACY (cont'd)

- ▶ **Provide Testimony to the General Assembly**
 - ▶ You are the expert in psychology and mental health practice.
 - ▶ Legislators have many areas of expertise - but, again, there are no psychologists currently in General Assembly. YOU are the authority!

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Three Unifying Principles of good advocacy

Clarity. Clear messaging and clear asks. Good advocates are excellent communicators who can frame even the most complex issue in a way most people understand.

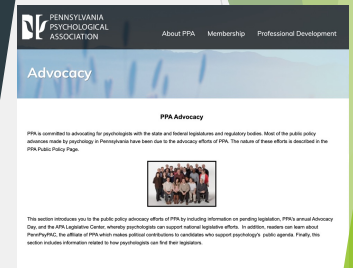
Flexibility. Good advocates are flexible enough to adapt to new information, adjust their methods, and pivot their messaging.

Transparency. Transparency leads to trust. That includes open, honest, and consistent communication about things like finances, leadership structures, messaging, methods, and much more.

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ROLES YOU CAN PLAY

- Join PPA!
- Get involved in the LGAC
- Join us for Advocacy Days
- Reach out to your legislators!
- Act on PPA Action Alerts
- Donate to PennPsyPAC



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Tips for Lobbying Your Legislators

- Read background information from PPA, APA, newspapers, etc.
- Get to know legislators' background, interests, party – read legislators' newsletters, election information, talk to others who know them, etc.
- Don't be intimidated. Most legislators will be cordial, interested in your views. Offer to serve as a resource; they will appreciate your expertise.
- Make appointment; be on time. Plan for a short meeting: 15-20 minutes.
- Address representative as Representative Smith, or Mr. or Ms. Smith. Address senator as Senator Jones, or just "Senator." If you have met with them several times you may decide to be on a first-name basis with them, but don't decide to do this unless they know who you are!
- Speak in lay terms. Legislators are generalists and have to deal with hundreds of issues. Start basic: Explain who psychologists are if this is your first meeting.
- Focus on goal of legislation: welfare of public and clients - not your own pocketbook issues.
- Explain issue briefly: background, problem, solution.

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Tips for Lobbying Your Legislators continued...

- Stick to main principles - 2 or 3. Know what point you want to make first. Know cost implications, if any.
- Use mix of statistics, facts and anecdotes (best). Leave fact sheet.
- Don't get bogged down in details. Legislators can offer amendments if they have technical concerns.
- Remind them of others in same party who support bill.
- Try to get them to state position or explain hesitancy or opposition.
- Know when to back off; don't beat a dead horse. Come back with other issues later.
- Send thank-you note afterwards, especially if they agreed with our position; good way to reinforce issues that were covered.

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Role Play

- **Legislators:** Your mission is to facilitate a mock visit with a state senator and/or representative. You may do this by assuming the role of the legislator or legislative aides and posing questions to the psychologists in your group based around the main points of each bill. You may step out of your role as a legislator if necessary to help the psychologists in your group identify the most convincing examples from their practice that illustrate these main points.
- If time permits, you can try different approaches to the meeting, by playing the role of a legislator who is a solid supporter of the legislation, one who is "on the fence" and one who is opposed to the legislation. Alternately, you can combine these persons into one by asking a range of questions, easy, moderately tough, and difficult.
- **Constituents:** Your mission is to show your appreciation to legislators who support the legislation, and for those who do not support it to convince them of its benefit to the public health. Be prepared to answer questions about your profession. Some legislators may not know the difference between a psychologist and a psychiatrist.

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Role Play Continued...

- **A Model Meeting**
- **Role of Constituents:**
 - Try to limit the meeting to approximately 15 - 20 minutes, or the scheduled time.
 - Greet the legislator and explain that you are a constituent. Indicate your residence and remember that constituency can be established by your office location, or the residences of the patients you treat.
 - Hand the legislator your business card so that he/she may refer to it during the meeting if necessary, or contact you in the future as a resource on health care issues.
 - One psychologist should state the purpose of the meeting in one or two sentences. For example: "Senator/Representative, we would like to talk to you about amending the licensing law for psychologists."
 - Make the major points presented on the fact sheets. The legislator will probably respond with some questions.
 - Thank the legislator for his or her time, offer the drop-off packet, offer to be a resource in the future, and offer to find out answers to any questions posed by the legislator that you were unable to answer.

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Sample Role Play

- ▶ Pick one of the following issues: RxP, Regulating AI in Mental Health, Start School Later
- ▶ Decide who is going to play legislator and constituents
- ▶ Take a couple of minutes and map out the structure of the meeting
- ▶ Do the role play
- ▶ Think about the role play- what went well/what could have been done better

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Questions?
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 Email Tanya: tanya@natickcounseling.com

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