

Representative Frank Ryan
101st Legislative District
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Media Contact: Charles Lardner
717.260.6443

clardner@pahousegop.com

RepFrankRyan.com / Facebook.com/RepFrankRyan

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My Yes Vote on State Budget Tied to New Fiscal Controls

As many of you know, I am very concerned with Pennsylvania's financial future – it is the main reason I chose to seek public office. I voted 'yes' on the 2019-20 state budget, but only because I have put forward a series of spending and borrowing controls.

In my life before politics, I developed financial rescue plans for businesses that had fallen into bankruptcy or were headed there. The first thing one does in such a circumstance is determine how money is being spent and where it is being spent.

For this, we need stricter auditing standards as reflected in my [House Bills 985](#) and [1203](#). These measures would ensure that audits conducted by state agencies, state departments and municipalities be carried out by personnel trained and certified to do so. It would also require personnel to participate in ongoing training and education to ensure they are up to date on the latest auditing standards and techniques.

My [House Bill 320](#) would place severe restrictions on the use of interest-rate management agreements, also known as "swaps." Quite simply, swaps are a form of gambling with public funds that can lead to financial disaster and must be restricted in their use. Under my bill, such swaps would require prior approval from the Department of Community and Economic Development and automatically be subject to audit by the auditor general.

Pennsylvania families must live within their means. When the economy shifts cycles, as it regularly does, they must adjust their spending and savings patterns. My Lean Government legislation would require that all state agencies be subject to an initial performance audit conducted by an experienced auditor. Agencies which may benefit from further scrutiny would be subject to additional audits every three years. All state agencies must respond to their audit and implement the lean process principles in order to analyze and improve their operations.

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FAST FACTS

Reinventing State Government For the 21st Century

As part of last year's budget, Gov. Tom Wolf proposed merging numerous state agencies including combining the Department of Corrections with the Board for Probation and Parole and merging the Departments of Health, Drug and Alcohol Programs, and Aging with the Department of Human Services. While these proposals did not make it into the final budget, Reps. Bryan Cutler (R-Lancaster), Seth Grove (R-York), Frank Ryan (R-Lebanon), Paul Schemel (R-Franklin) and Matthew Dowling (R-Fayette/Somerset) believe the governor was right to assess where Pennsylvania can streamline state government to improve services and reduce costs to taxpayers.

In this bipartisan spirit, Reps. Grove, Ryan, Schemel and Dowling have introduced a package of bills to streamline six Commonwealth agencies and merge them into three improved departments. These new agencies would be the Commonwealth Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of Business, Tourism and Workforce Development (DBTWD) and the Department of Local Government and Community Affairs (DLGCA).

Each merger in the legislation would require the adoption of a strategic plan detailing how the agencies described in the legislation would be combined. In order to provide adequate time to prepare for the mergers, the legislation allows for a strategic plan to be developed within seven months each bill's adoption.

While each merger is explained in greater detail below, the strategic plan for each merger contains similar requirements. These requirements include:

- 20 percent reduction in administrative costs.
- Improving the delivery of government services to all residents.
- Identification, consolidation and elimination of redundant programs.
- Improving the use of state funds to reduce the cost to the taxpayer.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Department of Business, Tourism and Workforce Development

Under current law, Pennsylvania has decentralized its job creation, economic development and business programs throughout several different state agencies. To improve economic development and strengthen job creation, **House Bill 53 introduced by Rep. Frank Ryan (R-Lebanon)** would merge economic development, business and workforce development policy under a single agency.

The proposal would merge the Department of Labor and Industry with functions from the Department of Community and Economic Development and Department of State. Under the legislation the new Department of Business, Tourism and Workforce Development (DBTWD) would be organized as follows:

- Bureau of Trust Fund Management.
- Bureau of Safety and Labor and Management Relations.
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- Bureau of Workforce Development and Business Finance.
- Bureau of Marketing & Tourism.
- Bureau of Licensing (Occupational Licensing and Business/Non-Profit Licensing).
- Office of Business Consultants.

This legislation ensures economic development programs are under one department to improve coordination and foster greater private sector job growth. It would provide a uniform department to allow Pennsylvania to better compete in a global economy. This proposed merger would also refocus current agencies into the singular mission of private sector job growth and sends this message: Pennsylvania is Open for Business.

This proposal would establish the new department as a one-stop shop for job creators by forming the Office of Business Consultants. The Office of Business Consultants would be designed to reduce the burden of state requirements by assisting job creators with compliance and economic development.

Improving Delivery of Care

Department of Health and Human Services

Governor Wolf during his first term this legislation proposed merging the Department of Health with the Department of Human Services. We applaud Governor Wolf for this bold proposal and believe merging these two agencies will allow the commonwealth to achieve savings while improving the quality-of-care provided to those in need. **House Bill 55 introduced by Representative Schemel**, would address the overlap in care and prevent redundancies in our social safety net programs and allows us to direct more money into care. Under this legislation the new department would be divided into the following bureaus:

- Public Health
- Medical Programs & Pharmacy Services
- Healthcare Quality & Licensure
- Eligibility & Self Sustainability
- Developmental Programs
- Children, Youth, & Families
- Child Development & Early Learning

Elimination of Outdated Boards and Commissions

As part of our effort to reinvent government for taxpayers **Representative Jonathan Fritz has introduced House Bill 57** which would eliminate 10 outdated boards and commissions. Each of these boards and commissions are entities created by the legislature which have not met in several years and or issued the report required under law in several years. The boards and commissions eliminated under the proposal are:

- Interstate Rail Passenger Advisory Council
- Pennsylvania Public Television Network Commission
- Industrial Resource Center Strategic Advisory Board
- Small Business Advocacy Council
- Advisory Committee on Probation
- Joint Committee to Review Cost of Living
- Legislative Representative for Collective Bargaining
- Pennsylvania Quality Leadership Awards Council
- Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Advisory Committee
- The Weather Modification Board