



PARSS LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

January 31, 2023

Voters will go to the polls to fill three seats vacated after the November election by Lt. Governor Austin Davis, Congresswoman Summer Lee, and the deceased Anthony DeLuca who passed before the election. All three legislative districts, the 32nd, 34th, and 35th, are traditionally Democratic. The odds are that all three districts will elect candidates of the same party as the previous incumbent. With a pickup of three seat in the special election, the Democrats would have the necessary 102 votes to control the House. More on that later.

Meanwhile, today, January 31, there will another special election in the Senate for the seat previously held by Senator John Gordner (R-Northumberland). He resigned his seat after the election to take a position as counsel in the Senate Republican Leader's office. Current state Representative Lynda Schlegel Culver (R-Northampton) is a candidate for the Senate seat and like the Allegheny County seats, an election likely controlled by the same party which previously held the seat. So, House Republicans will lose a seat until another special election is held. The difference in special election dates is due to the timing of the resignations and the fact that the Senate special election was set by Senate rules and the House elections by the courts, because there are no House rules.

The House has been in a period of suspended animation since opening the new session earlier this month. The House did elect a new speaker, Rep. Mark Rozzi (D-Berks), but none of the other bi-annual organizational procedures followed as is the norm. The new speaker, elected with Republican support, has engaged in a listening tour of the state with a bi-partisan committee of six to determine how to find a more effective way of running the state House. However, there have been no rules adopted, no bills introduced, and no committee meetings scheduled to consider any legislation. With the special elections likely to give the House a 102 Democrats-100 Republicans lineup, the question will be whether order will be restored in the House later this month.

Last week, the Auditor General released [an audit of twelve school districts](#) and called for closing "loopholes" in the Act 1 exception process. Auditor General Timothy DeFoor said districts were moving around reserve funds to be qualify under Act 1 to raise taxes and add referendum

exceptions. The PA Association of School Business Officials (PASBO) has pushed back on the audit. [PASBO says](#) only seven districts used the exception process for the 2021-22 fiscal year and that fund balances “reflect the careful decisions and multi-fiscal year planning by locally elected school boards across Pennsylvania.”