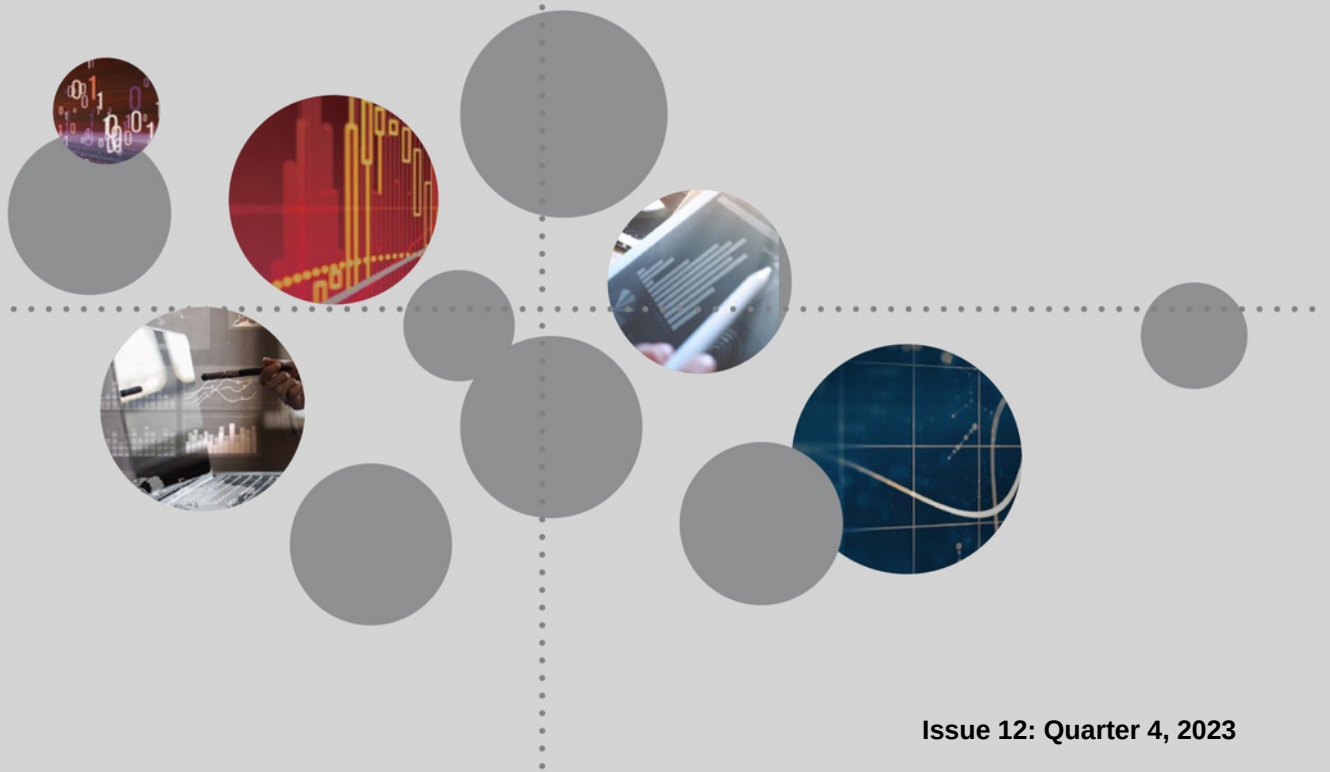


Policy Tracker

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THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Issue 12: Quarter 4, 2023

CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM ADOPTION



CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM

With climate change on the forefront of current world discussions, there has been a transition to new science standards by K-12 grades in schools across the U.S. These changes include coverage of climate change in curriculum.

Climate Change Curriculum Across the Nation

by Michael Shuba, Research Assistant

With Climate Change on the forefront of current world discussions, there has been a transition to new science standards by K-12 grades in schools across the U.S. These changes include coverage of climate change in curriculum.

From 2011 to 2013, a coalition of states banded together to create the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which are built on practices used by the highest performing countries. The framework is based upon the National Research Council's July 2011 Science Education framework for K-12.

The NGSS implement climate education in K-12 using three overarching themes: practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas. The themes allow students to obtain progressive science education from kindergarten through high school graduation. For instance, students in kindergarten have an Earth & Space Science standard centered on weather and climate, and from this will be able to ask questions about severe weather, preparedness, and response.

States across the U.S. can be categorized into two distinct classes based on their connections to NGSS: those using NGSS or similar standards and those with bills opposing NGSS or similar standards. For example, New Jersey's State Board of Education voted to revise an already climate inclusive curriculum by finding new ways to bring up the topic in mathematics and English/language arts.

On the other hand, Oklahoma, having adopted NGSS similar standards in June 2014, has partnered with Prager University for the use of their videos in social studies classes, which tend to question scientific facts.

By identifying policies associated with climate change curriculum in K-12, communities can better understand the variety of climate education being taught across the U.S.

States Using NGSS or Similar Standards

Alaska's State Board of Education, on March 29, 2019, approved new science standards on climate change similar to the NGSS.

California's Assembly Bill 285, as of September 15, 2023, is on its way to the governor's desk, and will require all grades 1-12 to look at causes, effects, mitigations, and adaptations of climate change.

Colorado's State Board of Education, on June 13, 2018, adopted a new set of standards based upon standards similar to the NGSS across the state.

Delaware, as of February 2017, declared Charles Darwin Day, recognizing evolution as the foundation for modern biology. The State Board of Education voted to adopt the NGSS in September 2013.

Georgia, as of June 2016, adopted Standards of Excellence for Science which is similar to NGSS.

Illinois State Board of Education voted to adopt NGSS in January 2014.

Indiana's State Board of Education, according to a June 08, 2022, press release, approved a new K-12 Indiana Academic Standards of Science that is similar in language to the NGSS coverage of evolution and climate change.

Maryland's State Board of Education approved NGSS in June 2013.



CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM ADOPTION



Climate Change Curriculum Across the Nation (cont.)

CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM

The Pennsylvania State Regulatory Review Commission approved updated K-12 science standards in STEM areas in 2022 that align with NGSS and replace standards from 2002.

Massachusetts's House of Representatives, as of February 16, 2023, was introduced to three new bills aimed at climate education. Bill 470 would establish a climate education trust fund. Bill 496 would create a revised set of standards for science, technology, and engineering. Bill 576 would revise environmental science and environmental protection standards. New Science and Technology/Engineering standards were approved in April 2016 and are similar to the NGSS.

Michigan's House Bill 4961, introduced on September 7, 2023, would establish an environmental task force that would focus students' understanding of environmental problems. The State Board of Education voted to adopt the NGSS in November 2015.

Nevada's State Board of Education, as of February 2014, voted to adopt the NGSS after a 2013 workshop on science education.

New Hampshire, as of 2016, has adopted the NGSS standards.

New Jersey State Board of Education, as of October 4, 2023, voted to revise an already climate inclusive curriculum, 2020's senate bill 1970, by finding new ways to bring up the topic in mathematics and English/language arts. The State Board of Education, as of July 2014, adopted new standards in seven areas: science (NGSS), English (Common Core), mathematics (Common Core), social studies, health and physical education, visual and performing arts, and world languages.

New Mexico, as of November 14, 2017, has adopted the NGSS along with New-Mexico specific additions (New Mexico STEM-ready science standards) to the New Mexico register.

New York's Senate Education Committee, as of March 13, 2023, was referred Senate Bill 5661. If enacted, it will require grades K - 12 to include climate change instruction. The State Board of Regents, as of December 2016, has adopted P-12 Science learning standards that are similar to the NGSS.

Oregon's Senate Bill 854 died in committee as on June 25, 2023. If enacted, it would have required school districts to establish and update for grades K – 12 a new climate change instructional program. The State Board of Education have adopted the NGSS in March 2014.

Pennsylvania State Regulatory Review Commission, as reported by NCSE on May 03, 2022, approved updated K – 12 science standards in STEM areas that align with NGSS and replace standards adopted from 2002.

South Carolina's State Board of Education and Education Oversight Committee, on May 11 and June 19, approved a new set of science standards on par with the NGSS.

Tennessee's State Board of Education, as of October 2016, approved new Academic Science Standards similar to NGSS.

Vermont's State Board of Education voted to adopt the NGSS in June 2013.

Washington's State Board of Education voted to adopt the NGSS in October 2013.

States with Bills Opposing NGSS or Similar Standards

Alabama's House Joint Resolution 78, adopted on May 2, 2017, promotes academic freedom of local and state educators when confronted with controversial topics including evolution, origins of life, and global warming.

House Bill 258, which died in committee March 29, 2018, would have allowed the Bible's accounts of creation alongside evolution. A new set of science standards, similar in framework to NGSS was adopted in September 2015.

CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM ADOPTION



Climate Change Curriculum Across the Nation (cont.)

CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM

The NGSS implement climate education in K-12 using three overarching themes: practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas. The themes allow students to obtain progressive science education from kindergarten through high school graduation.

Arizona's Senate Bill 1532, died when legislation adjourned June 30, 2021. If enacted, it would have controlled a teacher's ability to take a stance on what is considered controversial material, with penalty of \$5,000 fine. The State Board of Education, as of October 22, 2018, voted to adopt new science standards that are similar to the NGSS.

Arkansas's House Bill 1701, defeated in committee on April 21, 2021, would have allowed the teaching of creationism in public and open-enrollment charter schools. The State Board of Education, as of June 2015, has adopted the K-8 portions of NGSS. It added high school courses in 2018.

Connecticut, as reported in April 2023, had three climate bills die in legislation - House Bills 5063 and 5271 promoting climate change education and House Bill 6396 opposed to it. The State Board of Education approved to adopt the NGSS in November 2015.

Florida's Department of Education, as of August 07, 2023, approved the use of videos distributed by Prager University Foundation that have been found to distort certain topics within the curriculum. House Bill 989, signed as of June 20 2017, empowers any Floridian to challenge materials used in public schools and requires that challenges be heard by a designated committee. The State Board of Education, as of February 19 2008 (pre-NGSS), voted to approve new science standards that include evolution as a fundamental concept underlying biology.

Hawaii's House Bill 1052 and Senate Bill 1350, died in committee as of May 4, 2023. If enacted, they would have established a climate impact special fund to be used for purposes such as climate education and outreach. The State Board of Education adopted the NGSS in February 2016.

Idaho, as of February 22, 2023, and with much pushback, approved revised school science standards involving climate change. The State Board of Education, as of 2016, approved new State Science Standards which are similar to the NGSS. They were finalized through legislation February 2018.

Iowa's House File 2184, died in House Education Committee on February 1, 2020. If enacted, it would have prevented teachers from discussing materials that could be found political or ideological. The State Board of Education, as of August 2015, adopted new science standards similar to the NGSS.

Kansas State Board of Education overcame a lawsuit involving the adoption of the NGSS, which according to COPE et al. was in violation of the constitution, on November 14, 2016. On June 11, 2013, the State Board of Education adopted new science standards similar to NGSS.

Kentucky adopted the NGSS in 2013. Senate Bill 109, which died in committee March 30, 2023, would have yielded consequences for how climate change and evolution are discussed within the classroom.

Louisiana's Senate Resolution 224, introduced on May 31, 2019 and adopted the following day, commends Gene Mills, who was said to open the door for criticism of evolution and climate to be taught in public schools. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, as of March 8, 2017, adopted a new set of science standards similar to NGSS.

CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM ADOPTION



Climate Change Curriculum Across the Nation (cont.)

CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM

By identifying policies associated with climate change curriculum in K-12, communities can better understand the variety of climate education being taught across the U.S.

Maine's House Paper 1409, signed on May 3, 2022, establishes grant funds for a three-year pilot program implementing NGSS standards. It will involve partnership with non-profit community organizations and give priority to underserved schools and communities.

Houser Paper 1034, voted "NO" on June 20, 2023, would have adversely affected science education by preventing teachers from engaging in certain subjects. New Science and Engineering standards, as of April 2019, have been approved and are similar to NGSS.

Minnesota's House file 2297, introduced February 28, 2023, will if enacted, require the State Commissioner of Education to provide a model for climate justice programs for elementary and secondary school students.

Senate File 517 died in committee on March 10, 2023. It would have imposed a "Creator" situation to contrast scientific facts. The State Commissioner of Education, as of July 2019, has approved changes in K-12 curriculum comparable to NGSS standards.

Mississippi's House Bill 50, which died in the House Education Committee on February 23, 2016, would have allowed teachers in public schools to teach creationism.

State Board of Education, as of April, 2017, has approved College and Career Readiness Standards for Science (CCRS) which are an amalgam of NGSS, 2010 Mississippi standards, and newer standards from other states' approved CCRS.

Missouri's House Bill 486 died in committee on May 15, 2015. It would have allowed teachers academic freedom on criteria pertaining to evolution. New standards similar to NGSS were enacted in April 2016.

Montana's Office of Public Instruction, as reported by NCSE on October 10, 2023, has registered PragerU as a bonded textbook dealer. Senate bill 235, tabled as of February 13, 2023, would have excluded all content but scientific facts from the curriculum. New Science Content Standards, approved as of September 2016, are similar to NGSS.

Nebraska's State Board of Education, as of September 8, 2017, adopted a new set of state science standards that address climate - which was omitted from the previous 2010 adoption of standards.

North Carolina's revised set of standards, under consideration, as reported by the NCSE on July 31, 2020, would effectively remove the Paleolithic era from sixth grade social studies and therefore remove any discussion of evolution. North Carolina was also a lead partner in the development of the NGSS but has yet to adopt it due to the development of its own K-12 Science Essential Standards.

North Dakota's House Bill 1538, which was withdrawn January 22, 2019, "relates to the freedom to teach students the strengths and weaknesses of scientific theories and controversies." The State Superintendent, as of February 2019, approved Science Content Standards which are similar to NGSS.

CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM ADOPTION



CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM

From 2011 to 2013, a coalition of states banded together to create the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which are built on practices used by the highest performing countries. The framework is based upon the National Research Council's July 2011 Science Education framework for K-12.

Climate Change Curriculum Across the Nation (cont.)

Ohio's Senate Bill 83, as of March 28, 2023, will if enacted, constrain higher educational institutions from taking a stance on controversial beliefs and topic such as climate change and evolution if enacted, constrain higher educational institutions from taking a stance on controversial beliefs and topic such as climate change and evolution.

According to Ohio Legislature 135th Gen. Assem., the bill was passed through the Senate on May 5, 2023. The State Board of Education approved new science standards on February 13, 2018.

Oklahoma's Senate Bills 140 and 943 died in committee on March 2, 2023, Bill 140 would have empowered science denial in the classroom and Bill 943 cited climate ideology as a school's choice and as a potential justification of diverting funds from the public school system.

As of September 05, 2023, the Oklahoma Department of Education has partnered with PragerU Kids for the use of PragerU videos in social studies classes. New standards for science, similar to NGSS standards, were adopted in June 2014.

Rhode Island, as of June 15, 2023, had two pairs of climate change education bills die in committee. House Bill 6105, Senate Bill 551, and House Bill 6106, Senate Bill 558, would have created a Climate Change and Oceanic Protection Education program with a priority placed on professional development of teachers. The State Board of Education adopted the NGSS in May 2013.

South Dakota's Senate Bill 59 was tabled January 30, 2020. It would allow the misrepresentation of science in the classroom. The State Board of Education, as of May 2015, adopted new science standards similar to NGSS.

Utah's State Board of Education, as of June 01, 2023, approved standards that would weaken the discussion on climate change and evolution in high school supplementary science classes.

The State Board of Education, as of June 6, 2019, approved a new set of science standards for the K-5 and high school levels and, as of December 2015, they were introduced into grades 6-8.

Virginia's House Bill 362 died in committee on February 15, 2022. If enacted, it would have required the Board of Education to establish a climate change program focusing on climate change causes and solutions and would have been implemented no later than the 2024 – 2025 school year.

New science standards were adopted in October 2018 and are a revised copy of the 2010 standards that were written pre-NGSS.

West Virginia's Senate Bill 619 died on March 10, 2023. It would have allowed the teaching of intelligent design in grades K-12. New standards for science education were adopted on April 9, 2015. They contain additional language that distorts the causes of climate change.

Wyoming State Board of Education, as of September 3, 2016, unanimously approved a new set of state science standards with less definite human connections to climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM ADOPTION



Climate Change Curriculum Across the Nation (cont.)

Conclusion

NGSS standards, and standards like them, demonstrate a shift in educational systems that is more inclusive of anthropogenically enhanced climate change education. Therefore, it is essential to understand what states laws are being passed and approved that change K-12 science standards. When looking at how climate change education has been adopted across the U.S., it is evident that the acceptance of new standards that are directly from or similar to the NGSS are prevalent. Examples include early adopters of the standards like California, District of Columbia, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington (adopting the NGSS as early as 2013).

Some imaginative thinking has spurred an environmental scientist, Lauren Belmonte, to create a mobile climate change education program called Change is Simple (CiS) in 2011. CiS's mission is to cultivate lifelong social and environmental responsibility that drives actionable change, expands climate change education throughout Massachusetts and further into the U.S., and provides tailored programs to students in their classrooms at no costs to students or families. Their approach uses an integrated, multi-year sustainability curriculum custom-designed for K-12 where each grade level at each school receives its own custom-tailored courses that are designed specifically for its students and teachers.

These hands-on workshops are led by college student educators and include lesson topics such as global impacts of the use of products, energy, and food. Also, students actively learn to create green household items, reduce their waste through a relay race, present climate/weather data with a TV broadcast, and design their own sustainable cities. Quantitative data has shown an 85 percent increase in students' content knowledge, where pretests showed students initially scoring one percent.

Ninety percent of students were found to be engaged during the CiS lessons, and 92 percent of students were fully engaged for 60 minutes.

Qualitative data shows improved understanding of math, literacy, and STEAM skills. This data concludes that CiS has made a consistent and measurable impact that has improved student motivation to take care of the earth. As of December, 06 2023, CiS has taught 8165 students, visited 1408 classrooms, and served 35 schools.

While some early adopters and several other states are introducing bills that oppose the NGSS or similar standards - such as Kentucky's Senate Bill 109, Mississippi's House Bill 50, Oklahoma's Senate Bill 140 & 943, it is evident that many states across the U.S. have been making the move to more climate inclusive education. These new standards are intended to help youth not only understand the problems associated with climate change but also provide active solutions.

CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM

NGSS standards, and standards like it, demonstrate a shift in educational systems that is more inclusive of anthropogenically enhanced climate change education."



STATE LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

A curated briefing of state legislative proposals and recent legislative actions

STATE BRIEFINGS

- Updating the Medical Marijuana Permitting Program
- Ready-to-Work Pilot
- Mental Health Parity Laws - Expanding Access to Services

Updating the Medical Marijuana Permitting Program

Senate Bill 773, introduced in June 2023, would amend the Medical Marijuana Act's provisions on permits and licenses and provide additional dispensary permits.

Latest action: Third consideration and final passage, November 15, 2023.

State Senate Bill Would Establish Statewide Recovery-to-Work Pilot

A Senate bill introduced earlier this year, SB 69, would establish recovery-to-work as a pilot program within the Department of Labor and Industry, provide for local recovery-to-work pilot programs, and incentivize business participation.

The bill funds local workforce development boards, business partners, and other agencies to develop collaborative recovery-to-work programs that would provide career opportunities to individuals in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. Programming includes career readiness skills training and support services for participants' continued recovery.

Latest action: SB 69 was referred to Labor and Industry in October.

Shapiro Administration Directs Insurers to Meet Obligations for Autism Coverage

On November 8th, Governor Josh Shapiro and the Pennsylvania Insurance Department (PID) Commissioner Michael Humphreys announced that starting January 1, 2024, the Shapiro Administration will require all commercial insurers to meet their obligations under Pennsylvania law to provide coverage for autism benefits.

The PID published a notice in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on November 4, 2023 announcing that by no later than January 1, 2024, PID will require insurers offering commercial health insurance policies that include coverage for autism services to handle claims for those services in a manner that complies with the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) and Pennsylvania's mental health parity requirements.

Categorizing autism as a mental health benefit will make a positive impact on the approximately 55,000 Pennsylvanians with autism by requiring health insurers to adjust their insurance policy form language and claims handling processes to provide Pennsylvanians with autism the protections afforded by the mental health parity provisions. As a result, health insurers may not charge higher copays or deductibles for autism services than for physical health services, cover fewer autism service visits than they would for other health conditions, impose an annual limit for autism services, as well as other safeguards afforded by state and federal parity laws.





STATE LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

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STATE BRIEFINGS

- Citizen Law Enforcement Advisory and Review Commission
- Permitting Transparency

Governor Shapiro Signs Executive Order Creating Pennsylvania Citizen Law Enforcement Advisory and Review Commission

On November 2nd, Governor Shapiro signed Executive Order 2023-2 creating the Pennsylvania Citizen Law Enforcement Advisory and Review (CLEAR) Commission. The CLEAR Commission will bring together law enforcement experts and criminal justice reform advocates from across the Commonwealth to support public safety and ensure accountability for state law enforcement agencies who work to serve Pennsylvanians every day.

The CLEAR Commission will have oversight of multiple agencies under the jurisdiction of the Governor including the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), the Department of General Services (DGS) Capitol Police, the Department of Corrections (DOC) Law Enforcement Sub-units, the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR) Park Rangers, the Office of State Inspector General (OSIG) Bureau of Fraud Prevention and Prosecution, and the Department of Agriculture (PDA) Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement.

Governor Shapiro Launches First-in-the Nation Online Money-Back Guarantee System

On November 1st, Governor Josh Shapiro, the Commonwealth Office of Digital Experience, and the Office of Transportation and Opportunity launched [PAYback.pa.gov](https://payback.pa.gov), a new online money-back guarantee system that allows residents, businesses, charities, and schools to check their eligibility for a refund of their permit, license, or certification application fee and request if they believe they are eligible.

Using PAYback, Pennsylvania workers and businesses can also see the standard processing time for each application, increasing certainty for Pennsylvanians doing business with the Commonwealth, and request refunds if their applications are not processed within that timeframe.





STATE LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

A curated briefing of state legislative proposals and recent legislative actions

STATE BRIEFINGS

- Addressing Maternal Mortality
- Investments in Economic Development
- Real ID Application Process

Governor Shapiro Follows Through on Commitment to Address Maternal Mortality

On October 31st, Governor Josh Shapiro joined Senator Judy Schwank, Representative Morgan Cephas, and lawmakers from the Black Maternal Health Caucus and Women’s Health Caucus for a ceremonial signing of Senator Schwank’s Senate Bill (SB) 262.

SB 262, a new Pennsylvania law, ensures improved access to timely data on maternal health and maternal mortality in Pennsylvania, allowing researchers, doctors, and policymakers to make more informed decisions about medical care for moms and families.

REAL ID Application Process

Representative Benninghoff introduced HB 1243, an Act amending title 75 (Vehicles) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in licensing of drivers, providing for application for REAL ID.

Latest Action: Referred to Transportation in November.

Making Government Work Faster for Pennsylvanians and Securing Meaningful Investments in Economic Development

In October, Governor Shapiro and Department of Community and Economic Development Secretary Rick Siger joined Westinghouse to announce that the company will further develop the eVinci™ microreactor in Allegheny County and invest at least \$18 million and create more than 40 new high-paying jobs.

In addition, in October, celebrated the opening of a brand new 1.2 million square foot fulfillment center in York.

Since 2010, Amazon has invested more than \$21.6 billion in Pennsylvania, including infrastructure and compensation to employees. Amazon has created 25,000 full and part-time jobs in Pennsylvania in over 40 facilities across the Commonwealth.





FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

A curated briefing of federal legislative proposals and recent legislative actions

FEDERAL BRIEFINGS

- Small Business Child Care Investment
- Bipartisan Legislation - AI Use
- Pay Equity Act Introduced
- Recidivism Reduction Transparency Act
- EFFECTIVE Food Procurement Act

Small Business Child Care Investment Act

Senate Bill 673 deems certain nonprofit childcare providers to be small business concerns so that they may participate in specified loan programs administered by the Small Business Administration (e.g., the 7(a) loan program).

Latest Action: Referred to the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Senators Propose Bipartisan Federal Legislation Targeting AI Use

In October, senators proposed two bipartisan pieces of legislation that target the use of AI. One focuses on advancing military use and the other focuses on identity fraud.

The POST ID Act would allow the United States Postal Service to offer ID verification and related services to the private sector.

The second piece of legislation would allow establishment of the chief digital and artificial intelligence officer's (CDAO) governing council, which would be responsible for overseeing the Department of Defense's AI priorities.

Locality Pay Equity Act Introduced

On November 15th, U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and U.S. Representative Matt Cartwright (D-PA-8) introduced the Locality Pay Equity Act to "help put an end to the persistent wage disparities at Tobyhanna Army Depot and Letterkenny Army Depot, by requiring the U.S. Office of Personnel Management to treat all employees working at the same locations equally." The legislation is cosponsored by U.S. Senators John Fetterman (D-PA), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).

Legislation to Improve Federal Reentry Grant Programs

Congresswoman Shontel Brown (OH-11), Congressman Bobby Scott (VA-03), and Congressman Troy A. Carter, Sr. (LA-02) have filed legislation to improve reporting requirements for federal reentry grant programs and encourage more federal agencies to adopt programs that help formerly incarcerated individuals reintegrate into society.

The Recidivism Reduction Transparency Act would establish clear reporting requirements for Department of Justice (DOJ) adult and juvenile offender reentry grants and require the publication of best practice guides by the DOJ to encourage the development of similar demonstration projects.

EFFECTIVE Food Procurement Act

On November 20, Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. (NC-12) and Senator Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) announced the Enabling Farmer, Food Worker, Environmental, and Climate Targets through Innovative, Values-aligned, and Equitable (EFFECTIVE) Food Procurement Act, legislation that would require the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to leverage its power and set targets for purchasing sustainable, equitably procured products.

The legislation would also establish a \$25 million pilot program to create a values-aligned USDA purchasing process and support market access for small-scale and underserved producers.

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