

## Pennsylvania Perspective for Monday, March 31, 2025

### Pennsylvania

#### Medical Marijuana Oversight Bill Advances

The Pennsylvania House advanced a bill earlier this month to address concerns about doctor practices and patient care by increasing oversight of the state's medical marijuana program. Investigations by Spotlight PA revealed that a small number of doctors issued an extraordinarily high number of certifications, prompting calls for stricter regulations and better monitoring by state agencies. Spotlight PA has [more](#).

#### Secretary Schmidt Warns About Cuts to Federal Election Cybersecurity Resources

Pennsylvania Secretary of State Al Schmidt emphasized that no state can replace the federal election cybersecurity resources provided by the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), as the Shapiro administration reviews President Donald Trump's executive order overhauling U.S. elections and its potential impacts on state election security. The Pennsylvania Capital-Star has [more](#).

#### Sen. Mastriano Floats Ticket with Treasurer Garrity for 2026 PA Governor Race

State Senator Doug Mastriano (R-Adams/Franklin) is considering teaming up with Treasurer Stacy Garrity for the 2026 Pennsylvania gubernatorial race, believing their combined popularity and grassroots support would make them an unbeatable ticket. The Philadelphia Inquirer has [more](#).

#### Teacher Vacancies Persist in Over a Third of PA Districts

Despite a slight decrease in teacher vacancies, over a third of Pennsylvania districts reported at least one vacancy in the 2024-25 school year, with special education teachers being the most needed, and schools serving higher proportions of students in poverty and students of color facing the greatest challenges. The Philadelphia Inquirer has [more](#).

#### PUC to Hold Hearing on AI Data Centers' Impact on Electricity

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) will hold a hearing on April 24 to discuss the impact of AI data centers on the state's electricity grid, focusing on consumer protection, economic growth, and ensuring grid stability amid rising energy demands. The Pennsylvania Capital-Star has [more](#).

#### Warehouses Have Become PA's Biggest Cash Crop Amid E-Commerce Boom

Pennsylvania's strategic location and infrastructure have made it a hub for warehouse development, driven by the rise of e-commerce. While areas like the Lehigh Valley and Harrisburg have embraced significant growth, smaller regions like Centre County have seen mixed reactions to new warehouse projects. City & State Pennsylvania has [more](#).

#### PA Slow to Adopt of Red Light Cameras Despite Proven Safety Benefits



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### Related Practice Areas

- Government Relations - Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

Although red light cameras have been shown to reduce fatal crashes, their adoption in Pennsylvania has been slow due to logistical challenges and limited municipal eligibility, prompting new legislative efforts to expand their use statewide. Spotlight PA has [more](#).

### Unemployment Rate Holds Steady at 3.8% in February

Pennsylvania's unemployment rate remained unchanged at 3.8% in February, below the national rate of 4.1%, with a slight decrease in the civilian labor force and nonfarm jobs, while education and health services saw significant job growth. PoliticsPA has [more](#).

### State Invests \$1.7M in Erie Life Sciences Industry

Pennsylvania is investing \$1.7 million in a new laboratory at Gannon University for cancer research company First Ascent Biomedical, as part of a \$6.5 million collaboration to boost the life sciences sector in Erie, creating jobs and advancing health care innovation. Center Square Pennsylvania has [more](#).

### More Logging Expected in Allegheny National Forest Under Trump Directive

President Trump's executive orders calling for increased logging in federal forests, including Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest, aim to boost timber sales and local revenue, but officials emphasize the need for sustainable practices to balance economic benefits with environmental protection. Spotlight PA has [more](#).

## Philadelphia

### School District Faces \$300M Deficit, Uses Reserves to Avoid Cuts

The School District of Philadelphia is using 40% of its reserves to cover a \$306.4 million deficit for fiscal year 2026, delaying budget cuts for one more year but facing potential financial challenges and difficult decisions in the future. WHYY has [more](#).

## Pittsburgh

### Mayor Gainey Enhances Anti-Discrimination Housing Protections

Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey signed executive orders on Friday to strengthen local anti-discrimination housing protections, requiring landlords and developers who receive City funds to comply with anti-discrimination provisions and accept subsidized housing vouchers, in response to federal rollbacks of such protections. WESA has [more](#).

### PRT Urges Coalition for Increased State Transit Funding

Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) officials and advocates are calling for a coalition of riders, businesses, and community leaders to push for more state funding to avoid proposed service cuts and fare hikes, emphasizing the need for dedicated transit funding to support the region's economic and social well-being. Public comment on the proposed service cuts [began today](#).

## Federal

### Sen. Fetterman-Backed Bill Seeks SNAP Benefits for Striking Workers

U.S. Senator John Fetterman of Pennsylvania has introduced the Food Secure Strikers Act, aiming to allow striking workers to qualify for SNAP benefits, ensuring they can support their families while advocating for fair working conditions. WHTM has [more](#).

### Rep. Houlahan Urges Investigation into Signal Chat Leak Involving Trump Officials

U.S. Representative Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA-06) has called for an independent investigation into a leaked Signal chat involving senior Trump administration officials, describing it as a violation of

security protocol and national security standards. WHYY has [more](#).

#### **PA State Special Election Outcomes Boost Democratic Optimism**

Democrats hope that recent special election victories in Pennsylvania—where they regained a state House majority and won a traditionally Republican district—signal potential challenges for Republicans in upcoming elections in other states. USA Today has [more](#).

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