

## Meet Pa.'s new General Assembly: A mother-son and father-daughter combo, 2 women floor leaders & more

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By [Jan Murphy](#) | [jmurphy@pennlive.com](mailto:jmurphy@pennlive.com)

As the 2021-22 legislative session gets underway in Pennsylvania, it will be shy two members right from the start with Saturday's passing of Westmoreland County Republican Rep. Mike Reese and the Senate GOP leader's decision to not seat anyone to represent the 45th state senatorial district due to an election challenge.

But that's not the only unusual or interesting detail about this new session and the group of Pennsylvanians who will be making laws affecting citizens' everyday life for the next two years. There are several firsts including two women serving as floor leaders. Sen. Kim Ward, R-Westmoreland County, is the first woman to serve as majority caucus leader in Pennsylvania General Assembly while Rep. Joanna McClinton, D-Philadelphia, is the first Black woman to serve as a floor leader as well as the first woman to be elected as House Democratic leader.

Here are some other factoids that may be of interest about the Pennsylvania Legislature:

- Sen. Nikil Saval, D-Philadelphia, is the first Indian-American to serve in the Pennsylvania Senate and likely in the General Assembly.
- Freshman Rep. Milou Mackenzie, R-Northampton County, joins the state House to serve alongside her son, five-term incumbent Rep. Ryan Mackenzie, R-Lehigh County, becoming what is believed to be the first mother-son combo serving in the House of Representatives at the same time.
- Keeping it in the family also applies to the Tomlinsons of Bucks County. Republican Rep. Kathleen Tomlinson, is starting her first full two-year term in the House while her dad, Sen. Robert "Tommy" Tomlinson, R-Bucks County, who once held the seat she now holds, is now in his seventh four-year term in the Senate.
- Getting to know the names and faces of the people who occupy the 203 seats in the House and 50 seats in the Senate has been a challenge in recent years due to turnover. Since 2018, 125 new people have taken office in those chambers - that is nearly half of the General Assembly. That breaks down to 73 new faces in the House Democratic Caucus, 36 in the House GOP Caucus, nine in the Senate Democratic Caucus, and seven in the Senate Republican Caucus, which could grow to eight depending on what happens with the 45th state senatorial district.
- The oldest member in the state House of Representatives is Rep. Tony DeLuca, D-Allegheny County, who is 83 years old, and in the Senate, that honor goes to Sen. Gene Yaw, who is 77 years old.
- The youngest member in the House of Representatives is Rep. Brandon Markosek, D-Allegheny County, who is 27, and in the Senate, it is freshman Sen. Amanda Cappelletti, D-Delaware County, who is 34. By the way, she is not related to Penn State's Heisman Trophy winner John Cappelletti, according to Democratic sources.

- The most veteran members in the House is DeLuca, who has served since 1982, and in the Senate, the long-timer is Tomlinson, who did a two-term stint in the House before moving over to the Senate in 1995.
- There are 25 representatives in the House's freshmen class and five in the Senate's.
- The number of women in the two chambers currently sets a new record of 73, topping the number at the start of the last session by 11. That breaks down with 14 in the Senate and 59 in the House. However, with a vacancy in each chamber the possibility remains that a new record could be set later this session.
- The party breakdown of the chambers at the start of this session is 112 Republicans and 90 Democrats in the House and in the Senate, 28 Republicans, one independent who caucuses with the Republicans, and 20 Democrats.