

House Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities Committee

09/29/26, 10:00 a.m., Room 523, Irvis Office Building

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The committee met to consider several bills.

[HB 2480](#), Prime Sponsor: [Rep. Jason Ortity \(R-Allegheny\)](#) – (PN 3338) The Utility Worksite Automated External Defibrillator Safety Act requires automated external defibrillators at utility or electrical worksites; imposes duties on the Department of Labor and Industry; and imposes penalties. Details legislative findings and the purpose of the Worksite Automated External Defibrillator Safety Act. Defines “automated external defibrillator (AED),” “department,” “lineworker,” “utility” and “utility or electrical worksite” or “worksite.” Requires at least one AED readily available and operable at each utility worksite. Provides that an AED should be required at temporary, mobile or in-the-field worksites and should be located in reasonable proximity on a mobile unit that is accessible to lineworkers and line crew leaders during working hours. Provides for each location a utility deploys its workers separately, with an AED present and operative at each one. Requires notice from the utility of the AED location at each worksite and in any applicable job safety briefing conducted prior to the start of work or on a tailboard of a vehicle used at the worksite. Provides for current certification and training for CPR and AED use for a sufficient number of lineworkers at each worksite. Establishes the training content each lineworker must learn for CPR and AED use. Requires utilities to maintain a record of required training that is made available for inspection upon departmental request. Provides standards to maintain an AED with manufacturer guidelines and ensure the AED is stored properly. Details inspection procedures to verify an AED is present at its designated location, shows its readiness for use through testing and is not damaged or compromised. Requires documentation for inspections that shall include all information less than two years old. Provides for Good Samaritan and utility, owner and operator immunities that are consistent with and in addition to protections applicable to use of AEDs in schools, health clubs, hotels and coal mines that can be construed broadly to encourage their availability and use in emergencies. Provides for department authorization of investigation due to violations, in which an authorized representative can enter and inspect a worksite at any reasonable time to examine and look over records relating to compliance or to subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, examine witnesses or compel the production of records or other documents necessary to enforce this act. Provides for penalties, including a warning letter for a first violation to be corrected within 30 days, and administrative action to assess a fine up to \$500 for a second or subsequent violation. Requires the department to adopt rules and regulations to implement this act. Provides for conflict with federal law, including

regulations of the United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Requires the department, in any conflict with federal law, to issue a statement of policy explaining the conflict and those impacted, including any relevant information for the public, give notice of the statement to the Legislative Reference Bureau and conduct stakeholder outreach for feedback on the statement. Provides nothing in the act can be construed to create a duty for any person to use an AED, require the placement of an AED in a location other than a utility or electrical worksite or limit or reduce protections or requirements for AEDs under other federal and state law. Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as amended**.

[A04305](#), by Metzgar, removes the legislative findings, replaces definitions, establishes contractor confirmation, mutual assistance and the testing and maintenance requirements of AEDs and makes technical adjustments. The amendment was unanimously **adopted**.

Rep. Ortity explained that the bill would require utilities to have AEDs readily available at utility work sites, including both fixed locations and mobile crews working in the field. He described line work as dangerous work involving poles, live power lines and severe weather. He noted that workers face risks of sudden cardiac arrest from electrical shocks or physical strain. He pointed out that Pennsylvania already requires AEDs in locations such as schools, hotels, gyms and coal mines but does not currently require them at utility work sites. He emphasized the importance of having AEDs immediately available because each minute without treatment after cardiac arrest reduces the chance of survival by about 10%. He noted that access can be particularly important in rural areas where hospitals or other medical facilities may be far away. He explained that the bill had been amended following discussions with utility companies and the IBEW over the previous several weeks and said the resulting version reflected those discussions. He thanked [Minority Chair Carl Metzgar](#) (R-Somerset) and the committee for their work on the legislation. He added that required training would be provided to workers at no cost through recognized programs such as the Red Cross and American Heart Association and asked members to support the bill.

Chair Metzgar added that the bill had been developed with assistance from [Chair Danilo Burgos](#)' (D-Philadelphia) office and the IBEW. He explained that his amendment addresses practical implementation concerns, including where AEDs would be placed on trucks, who would be responsible for ensuring they are available and ensuring contractors comply with the requirements. He described the amendment as a way to make the bill workable in practice and thanked those involved for their assistance.

[HB 2584](#), Prime Sponsor: [Rep. Elizabeth Fiedler \(D-Philadelphia\)](#) – (PN 3494) Amends Title 66 (Public Utilities), in Public Utility Commission (PUC), further providing for consumer protection and information. Directs PUC to create and maintain a centralized public database of all rates it oversees, not later than 120 days after the effective date. Requires information to be searchable. Stipulates that PUC shall make the database available on its website and, when PUC receives a rate increase request, the database shall be updated with the information not later than 10 days after PUC's receipt of the request. Mandates that the database contain all information for each rate PUC oversees. Permits PUC to contract with a third party to operate the database. Effective immediately. The bill was unanimously **reported as amended**.

[A04230](#), by Pielli, excludes the rates of telecommunications carriers from the bill. The amendment was unanimously **adopted**.

Chair Metzgar asked for an explanation as to why the amendment excludes telecommunications carriers.

[Rep. Chris Pielli](#) (D-Chester) specified that based on his understanding from [Rep. Emily Kinkead](#) (D-Allegheny), the legislation is focused on utility companies, specifically gas, water and electric utilities. He noted that the bill does not broadly encompass the larger group of workers or entities referenced. He said this understanding was part of the agreement with the bill's author regarding the amendment.

[HB 2596](#), Prime Sponsor: [Rep. Kristine Howard \(D-Chester\)](#) – (PN 3522) The Public Utility Credit Act provides for public utility credit reporting; and imposes duties on public utilities. Defines “public utility.” Asserts that a public utility will provide customers with the opportunity to opt into and, at any time, opt out of having the public utility payments of the customers reported to a nationwide credit reporting agency. Provides notification procedure for new and existing customers of a public utility. Declares customers can opt into and, at any time, opt out of public utility payment credit reporting at any time after notification and prohibits public utilities from imposing a time limit or expiration date on the credit reporting option, nor may the option be rescinded at any time in the future. Asserts that a public utility may not pass on costs or charge a fee to a consumer who chooses to opt into or opt out of the credit reporting under this section. Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

[HB 2674](#), Prime Sponsor: [Rep. Chris Pielli \(D-Chester\)](#) – (PN 3715) Amends Title 66 (Public Utilities), in general provisions relating to Public Utility Code, further providing for definitions. Defines “commercial data center” and amends the definition of “public utility”

to prohibit data centers from obtaining public utilities status. Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as amended**.

[A04235](#), by Pielli, specifies that the term “public utility” does not include a commercial data center. The amendment was unanimously **adopted**.

Rep. Pielli asked members to support House Bill 2674, describing it as legislation intended to protect Pennsylvania ratepayers and preserve local control over land-use decisions. He stated that Pennsylvania's energy costs had increased by more than 70% since 2020 as data center construction accelerated and cited up to 130 existing data centers with another 55 proposed, planned or under consideration. He expressed concern that data centers could seek classification as public utilities. He argued that such a designation could allow for-profit entities to preempt local zoning laws, exercise eminent domain and operate as regulated monopolies. He said House Bill 2674 would explicitly prohibit data centers from obtaining public utility status. He emphasized that the bill was not intended to stop technological innovation but to establish safeguards, protect ratepayers and preserve local residents' role in community development. He urged members to vote in favor of the bill.

[HB 2648](#), Prime Sponsor: [Rep. Tarik Khan \(D-Philadelphia\)](#) – (PN 3671) Amends Title 40 (Insurance), in regulation of insurers and related persons generally, adding a chapter to provide for health insurance alteration prohibitions. Provides definitions. Prohibits a health insurer from altering the coverage provided by a health insurance policy during the term of a health insurance policy for a health care service that was included in the covered person's health insurance policy, including the period when the covered person has received the health care service. Asserts that the alterations under this section include increasing a premium, a copayment, coinsurance and a deductible. Does not apply this section to a health care service obtained by a covered person through fraudulent or criminal activity, subject to a statement issued by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) calling into question the clinical safety of the benefit or a notice provided by the manufacturer of a prescription drug to the FDA related to a manufacturing discontinuance or potential discontinuance of the drug. Deems a violation of this chapter as a violation of the Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law and the Unfair Insurance Practices Act, specifying that nothing in this chapter shall preclude a covered person from exercising any right provided under the Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law and a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 shall be imposed on a health insurer who violates this. Applies this section only to a health insurance policy issued by a health insurer licensed by the Insurance Department (PID). Provides what nothing in this section shall be

construed to do. Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **referred** to the House Insurance Committee.