

Senate Labor & Industry Committee

06/10/2026, 10:00 a.m., Room 8E-A, East Wing

By Julia Walters, Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider legislation.

SB 406, Prime Sponsor: Sen. Christine Tartaglione (D-Philadelphia) – (PN 361) The Meat Packing and Food Processing Protection Act provides for regulation of the meat packing and food processing industry by creating facility health and safety committees in the workplace; establishes the industry workers' rights coordinator within the Department of Labor and Industry; and imposes penalties. Provides definitions. Asserts that an employer must provide certain information to an employee in the language that the employee speaks if at least 5% of the employer's workforce speaks the language. Mandates that employers provide worker safety training to new employees during normal working hours and at the standard rate of compensation in languages spoken by at least 5% of employees. Directs that training be provided without a penalty imposed by the employer. Provides that employees have the right to additional training, upon request, within 30 days of the employee's hire date. Directs that an employer pay for out-of-pocket expenses not covered by an insurance plan associated with the emergency medical transportation. Mandates that an employer establish and administer a joint labor-management facility health and safety committee. Provides for committee membership, formation, responsibilities, meetings and training records. Prohibits employers from interfering with the selection of employee representatives to serve on the committee or the ability for employee representatives to perform duties. Prohibits loss of pay for committee members during training. Provides for an industry workers' rights coordinator to be appointed by the Secretary of Labor and Industry. Prohibits retaliation from employers against an employee for exercising the employee's rights under the act. Provides for a \$500 per day penalty for failure to comply. Provides for no more than \$10,000 per day for not curing the failure within 10 days. Permits the department to promulgate necessary regulations. Asserts that nothing in the act be construed to diminish the rights, privileges or remedies of an employee under a collective bargaining agreement. Provides for abrogation of inconsistent regulations. Effective in 90 days. The bill was reported as amended, with Sen. Dan Laughlin (R-Erie) voting in the negative.

A03552, by Robinson, makes technical changes to specify intent, including what businesses are covered under the act. The amendment was unanimously adopted.

Sen. Tartaglione explained how important the meat packing industry is to Pennsylvania. She mentioned how union members from the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1776 in the meat packing and processing industry came to Sen. Tartaglione with concerns on unsafe work conditions. Sen. Tartaglione mentioned the issue was brought up during the COVID-19 pandemic and added the industry has "always had longstanding safety concerns." She discussed an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) study that illustrated an average of 27 workers per day in the United States "suffered amputations or other serious injuries requiring hospitalization" between the years of 2015 through 2023. Sen. Tartaglione said the largest portion of these hospitalizations came from the meat packing and processing industry. "These injuries happen because of poor training, lack of adequate translation for non-English speakers, unsafe working conditions, overcrowded production lines, exhaustion or the absence

of proper protective equipment,” she listed. Sen. Tartaglione noted many of these injuries were preventable. She stated Senate Bill 406 includes reporting requirements on unsafe conditions as well as safety training offerings in alternate languages for non-English-speaking workers.

Minority Chair John Kane (D-Delaware) added that Senate Bill 406 requires “joint employee and employer workplace safety committees” which will meet regularly to discuss workplace hazards and safety improvements. He noted communication is important for a safe work environment. He urged a yes-vote on the bill.

Sen. Laughlin asked if the bill is “redundant” based on standards already implemented by OSHA. Sen. Tartaglione answered that the meatpacking and processing industry does not operate up to OSHA standards. “There’s a majority of the folks that don’t speak English,” she added. “They’re not being taught how to do the job properly.” Sen. Tartaglione said she did not find the bill redundant. Sen. Laughlin addressed Chair Devlin Robinson (R-Allegheny) and said if his vote was needed to pass the bill today, he would be a yes-vote. He added if his vote is not needed to pass the bill, he would be a no-vote.

SB 906, Prime Sponsor: Sen. Devlin Robinson (R-Allegheny) – (PN 1021) The Pennsylvania Family and Medical Leave Act establishes the Pennsylvania Family and Medical Leave Program in the Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) and the Family and Medical Leave Fund in the State Treasury; confers powers and imposes duties on L&I; creates a right of action; and imposes penalties. Outlines the legislative intent and provides definitions. Establishes the program, providing for required documents, notice of approved claim, information sharing, confidentiality and cooperation among departments. Authorizes the department to administer the act and the fund, outlining the powers and duties, including setting the amount of benefits payable, providing information, developing and preparing written notices, medical certification and necessary forms, evaluating and adjudicating claims and determining the amount of payroll contributions, coordinating benefits, making payments, developing abstracts, providing employee complaint forms, developing forms and procedures, promulgating regulations and issuing an annual report. Requires the Secretary of Labor and Industry to enforce the act through an administrative complaint and appeals process. Provides for the eligibility for family and medical leave benefits, outlining basis for receipt benefits, employment and income eligibility requirements, interaction with the worker’s compensation act and the unemployment law, filing of benefits claim procedures, medical certification, qualifying act of violence certification, married or domestic partners employed by the same employer guidelines, regulations and determination of eligibility guidelines. Outlines the duration of the benefits of the maximum leave of 20 weeks. Provides for the calculation of benefits, limitations and for the adjustment of benefits calculations. Provides for limits on taking benefits and nonsequential leave. Provides for contributions, including payments into the program and commencement of payroll contributions, outlining the calculation of payroll contributions. Establishes notification requirements and penalties for the failure to withhold wages for income tax, sales and use tax purposes. Establishes the reduced leave schedule. Provides for the coordination of benefits, including for leave concurrent with federal law, coordination with other paid leave, outlining the employer’s obligation and prohibiting subsequent collective bargaining agreements or employer policies. Establishes that nothing in the act shall be construed to impact provisions of the Workers’ Compensation Act and the Public Employee Relations Act. Establishes employer waivers to use a private plan and additional employer duties. Establishes notice requirements. Provides for erroneous payments and disqualification for benefits. Establishes elective coverage, violations and judicial review.

Provides for continuing appropriation, limitations on funds and for other deposits. Establishes annual reporting requirements. Requires the establishment of a public education outreach campaign, outlining content requirements. Establishes the Pennsylvania Family and Medical Leave Act Advisory Board to assist in the implementation, providing for the composition of the board, terms, quorum and meetings. Requires public access and prohibits compensation. Outlines regulation requirements. Provides for right of action, allowing civil action by employee, fees and costs, limitations, civil action by the secretary and money recovered by the secretary. Effective in 180 days. The bill was reported as committed, with Sen. Lisa Baker (R-Luzerne) and Sen. Kim Ward (R-Westmoreland) voting in the negative.

Chair Robinson said his bill would help families during their “most difficult and joyous moments” and is “critically important” for workers across the commonwealth. He acknowledged Sen. Maria Collett (D-Montgomery) for being a co-sponsor of the bill and invited her to comment.

Sen. Collett discussed how Pennsylvanians are “doing their best to hold their lives together.” She mentioned how families are put in situations where they must choose between going to work and attending to family matters such as sickness. “These are not aberrations,” she said. “This is any given Wednesday in Pennsylvania.” Sen. Collett stated that work and family “should not be in constant conflict.” She acknowledged the bill has bipartisan support and will be impactful and meaningful for families. Sen. Collett expressed her desire to deliver relief to employees and small businesses across the state.

Chair Kane said there is “nothing that can change your day” like hearing a doctor give a diagnosis of short- or long-term illness. He mentioned the significance of offering statewide family and medical leave and giving employees confidence in their places of employment. “Employees will pay for these benefits through payroll deductions at no cost to the employer,” he added. Chair Kane said Senate Bill 906 creates a balance between health and productivity. He stated a “healthy workforce is a productive workforce.”

Sen. Nick Pisciotto (D-Allegheny) described his experience becoming a new parent and stated he was grateful his workplace allowed him access to paid leave. “Whether it’s to care for a new child, for yourself, for a family member or some combination of all three, we need this paid family leave law here in Pennsylvania,” he emphasized. Sen. Pisciotto recognized the broad support for Senate Bill 906. He added that strong communities and workforces are built when individuals are given tools to “maintain their livelihoods.” He thanked the makers of the bill for their efforts.

Sen. Laughlin recalled being a prime sponsor of the bill in a past legislative session and mentioned he is currently a co-sponsor of Senate Bill 906. He expressed concern that there could be accusations “of putting an unfunded mandate on the workers.” Sen. Laughlin continued, “That’s why we kept it out of the employer side of this.” He recalled how his version of the bill in a past legislative session capped the contribution at 0.5% and asked if the contribution in Senate Bill 906 was increased to 1%. Sen. Collett affirmed that the contribution is currently set at 1% in the bill. Sen. Laughlin said he would vote yes on the bill and mentioned his desire for future conversations on the contribution percentage. Sen. Collett said she would “welcome” further discussion.

Sen. Camera Bartolotta (R-Washington) mentioned hearing from business owners that it is difficult to keep and maintain employees. She added that she believes Senate Bill 906 will benefit

business owners because it will show employees “they have a place to come back to” after a significant event in their lives. Sen. Bartolotta expressed concern for filling gaps in business when employees take paid family and medical leave. She expressed interest in further conversations regarding how to address potential employment gaps. Sen. Bartolotta said she was “definitely” a yes-vote on the bill. “It’s time that we honor families who are committed to taking care of loved ones,” she continued. Sen. Collett agreed with Sen. Bartolotta’s concern and said she would be “happy” to work with her on potential solutions.

SB 1215, Prime Sponsor: Sen. Devlin Robinson (R-Allegheny) – (PN 1502) Amends the Workers’ Compensation Act, in liability and compensation, further providing for schedule of compensation. Requires the reimbursement for any compound drug to be calculated on a per-ingredient basis and asserts that the compound drug shall not be reimbursed if any individual ingredient does not have a valid and recognized NDC number, outlining what shall apply. Specifies that the reimbursement for any noncompound topical drug shall be the lesser of 110% of the AWP, the Federal Upper Limit as established by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1396r8(e)(4) (relating to payment for covered outpatient drugs) and 42 CFR 447.514 (relating to upper limits for multiple source drugs) or \$240 for a 30-day supply, prorated if the supply is greater or less than 30 days, plus a single dispensing fee of \$10 per prescription. Defines “compound drug” and “topical drug.” Effective in 60 days. The bill was reported as committed, with Chair Kane, Sen. Marty Flynn (D-Lackawanna), Sen. Pisciotto and Sen. Tartaglione voting in the negative.

Chair Robinson said he introduced the bill in response to conversations with the Workers’ Compensation Advisory Council (WCAC), who received data from the Workers’ Compensation Research Institute (WCRI) that showed Pennsylvania is a “significant outlier” among other states regarding the prescription reimbursement rate for topical drugs. He mentioned WCAC supports the bill and noted it will address prescribing and pricing challenges of topical drugs without compromising patient care. He noted many pharmacies do not upcharge for topical drugs, but the “tiny number” of pharmacies that take advantage make a significant impact. Chair Robinson stated 75% of costs for topical drugs come from 20 out of 660 commonwealth pharmacies according to the Pennsylvania Compensation Rating Bureau (PCRB). He said Senate Bill 1215 uses methods developed by other states to cap reimbursement rates at “reasonable” amounts. Chair Robinson assured that the bill allows for proper treatment and emphasized that cost savings should not come at the expense of necessary care. He added his office has had conversations with stakeholders on “all sides” of the issue. Chair Robinson mentioned his bill is a “starting point,” and he is open to further negotiation. “I am also aware this entire conversation is complicated by a court decision last year, *Federated vs. Summit Pharmacy*,” he noted. Chair Robinson described the Pennsylvania Supreme Court case “struck down” how average wholesale price is determined in the workers’ compensation system. He noted the lower court case is pending and said that lowering topical drug prices is necessary despite the outcome of the case. Chair Robinson mentioned the Pennsylvania Supreme Court may require additional action from the committee regarding the bill.

Chair Kane said he received several stakeholder concerns regarding Senate Bill 1215 and its “potential to limit care to injured workers.” He added he would be a no-vote today but mentioned his commitment to working with Chair Robinson and stakeholders on an amendment.