

## PACP Column: October 2025

### Working Together for a More Competitive Pennsylvania

As Pennsylvania's budget stalemate extends beyond the three-month mark, the need for collaboration across government, business, and community leadership remains urgent.

Fortunately, progress has been made regarding one of the key issues surrounding the stalemate – transit funding. Last month, an agreement was reached to temporarily provide funding to public transit agencies by redirecting capital dollars to cover operating expenses, with Governor Josh Shapiro directing PennDOT to approve a \$394 million transfer to the Southeast Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). This action is a short-term measure to prevent service cuts for agencies like SEPTA and Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT) due to an ongoing state budget stalemate, while efforts continue to find a long-term funding solution.

The PA Chamber recently [issued a statement](#) signaling support for a comprehensive approach that complements any funding proposals with meaningful reforms to strengthen Pennsylvania's transportation systems statewide. This includes [Senate Bill 383](#), which would modernize the decades-old law that caps damages when transit agencies are subject to civil lawsuits. Additionally, we encouraged lawmakers to consider revenue generation proposals that are the product of compromise.

Pennsylvania's business community depends on a well-connected, multimodal transportation network – including roads, bridges, and public transit – to support economic growth, workforce mobility, and regional connectivity. Continued delays as the budget remains unresolved risk compounding disruptions that affect every corner of the state— from urban transit systems to rural infrastructure.

But working to reach a comprehensive transportation funding solution is only one piece of the workforce puzzle.

Across Pennsylvania, small businesses continue to grapple with workforce shortages—and the childcare crisis is a major contributor. Families are spending an average of 22 percent of their income on childcare, with some pay more than their mortgage. Providers, meanwhile, face staffing shortages, rising insurance costs, and regulatory burdens that mirror the pressures small businesses face every day.

The PA Chamber has crafted a member-driven childcare policy agenda designed to stabilize the sector and unlock workforce participation. Key reforms include:

- **Supporting staffing efforts** by opening pathways for retired educators and future teachers.

- **Reducing administrative burdens** through streamlined licensing and permitting.
- **Combating rising insurance costs** with legal reforms to curb excessive litigation.

The cost of inaction is staggering. Pennsylvania loses \$3.47 billion annually due to childcare-related disruptions—including \$2.88 billion in lost productivity and \$591 million in forgone tax revenue. That’s not just a family issue—it’s a business issue.

Local chambers are essential partners in this work, helping to identify the challenges employers face in communities across Pennsylvania and partnering with the PA Chamber to communicate those needs directly to lawmakers. But your role goes far beyond advocacy. Chambers are strategic partners in crafting solutions that transcend rural and urban divides, supporting families, businesses, and communities.

Building on that spirit of leadership and collaboration, the PA Chamber is proud to highlight the outstanding contributions of individuals who exemplify the chamber community’s commitment to driving meaningful change.

This summer, we welcomed former Wyoming County Chamber President Gina Suydam to the PA Chamber team as our Director of External Affairs. She and PA Chamber Government Affairs Manager Aaron Riggleman recently earned national recognition for their leadership in education and workforce development. Gina received the prestigious Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) designation, while Aaron was selected for the U.S. Chamber Foundation’s Business Leads Fellowship Program, joining a national network of leaders focused on solving workforce challenges.

Their achievements reflect the PA Chamber’s commitment to professional excellence—and our shared mission to build a more competitive, resilient Pennsylvania.