

**RESOLUTION R-2022-86  
LUZERNE COUNTY COUNCIL**

*A Resolution of Luzerne County Council Supporting the 2022 Priorities  
of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania*

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania counties have selected seven priority issues that will be the focal point of the counties' proactive agenda for 2022; and

WHEREAS, these priorities showcase the counties' commitment to the core services they provide to the people and communities of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, achieving these seven county priorities underscore the critical need to redefine, reinvigorate and emphasize the state-county partnership in service delivery in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, the top priority for Pennsylvania counties in 2022 is advocating for appropriate funding to support the crumbling mental health system; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania counties provide community-based mental health services, such as community residential programs, family-based support, outpatient care and crisis intervention which are critical to the well-being of our constituents and our communities; and

WHEREAS, state funding has lagged far behind needs and caseloads for years, which has negatively affected services while also putting tension on communities and local budgets; and

WHEREAS, Luzerne County and the Luzerne-Wyoming County Mental Health and Developmental Services has invested in community-based mental health services that coordinate and invest in programs and services that meet the needs and challenges of local communities, including, but not limited to, Handle With Care, NEPA Trauma Alliance, Children & Adolescent Services System Program, the Luzerne County CARES Commission and various child, adolescent and adult mental health forensic services; and

WHEREAS, a key objective under this priority is the preservation of the successful Behavioral Health Choices program, which has allowed each county the flexibility to deliver mental health and drug and alcohol services to individuals enrolled in Medicaid that meet local needs and challenges; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania counties will need collaboration between the legislature and administration to work closely with them on a targeted, strategic investment of dollars into community mental health services at the county level to continue the existing safety net and bolster the availability of mental health services to those who need them as vital steps in the right direction; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania counties' second priority is addressing the human services workforce crisis to continue to successfully deliver human services programs to our most vulnerable citizens; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania counties' third priority is broadband expansion considering the immediate need for infrastructure and partnerships critical to expanding access that will increase economic vitality and personal quality of life; and

WHEREAS, in Luzerne County, approximately 16.1% of our residents do not have reliable internet service, missing opportunities to access educational tools, health care, emergency services and other key parts of their everyday lives; and

WHEREAS, appropriate funding and reform for the Children and Youth systems is Pennsylvania counties' fourth priority in order to address critical system needs including staffing shortages, increasing caseloads, a statewide response to complex cases and better cross-system collaboration and training; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania counties continue to seek to promote election integrity, including clear rules to enable consistent implementation statewide, resolving ambiguous matters such as drop boxes, signatures and curing ballots, continuing to request expanded pre-canvassing time, and moving back the mail-in ballot application deadline to 15 days before an election; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania counties have chosen 911 funding and reauthorization as their sixth priority, to ensure that a new funding formula be enacted prior to the January 2024 sunset of the current formula and seeking additional and sustainable funding sources that will meet the growing needs of residents and associated costs; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania counties chose funding and resources for elections as their seventh priority, recognizing that the significant changes to election administration resulting from Act 77 of 2019 have increased the costs and resources needed for counties to administer successful elections; and

WHEREAS, the state-county partnership across all areas of service delivery must again be prioritized, including a commitment to additional and sustainable funding for all human services and county-administered programs.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Luzerne County stands ready to work with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania and counties throughout the commonwealth in support of these priorities for 2022; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that these priorities emphasize the important role Luzerne County plays in improving our communities and the well-being of our residents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Luzerne County calls upon the General Assembly and the Administration to work together in partnership with counties to jointly determine the most effective ways to continue meeting the needs of Pennsylvanians; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, collaboration between county government and the Commonwealth on these priorities will lead to solutions that improve stewardship of taxpayer dollars, reduce cost, increase local flexibility, and assure the quality of services counties provide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, a copy of this Resolution shall be sent to Governor Wolf and the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

This Resolution shall become effective immediately.

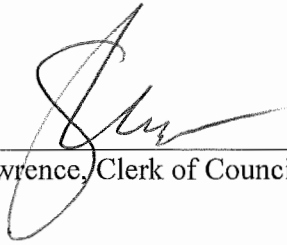
ADOPTED this 10<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2022.

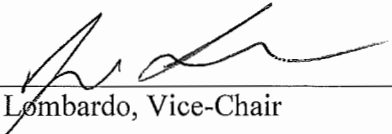
ROLL CALL VOTE (9-0)

YES: Bienias, Lescavage, McDermott, McGinley, Perry, Radle, Thornton, SJ Urban and Wolovich

LUZERNE COUNTY COUNCIL

By: Kendra Radle  
Kendra Radle, Chair

Attest:   
Sharon Lawrence, Clerk of Council

By:   
John Lombardo, Vice-Chair