
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1630 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY SMITH-WADE-EL, HOHENSTEIN, INNAMORATO, MADDEN,
HILL-EVANS, HANBIDGE, RABB, BELLMON, SCHLOSSBERG, BULLOCK,
SANCHEZ, MERSKI, KAZEEM, KINSEY, VENKAT, STEELE, BOYD, KHAN,
CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, PARKER, KRAJEWSKI, PIELLI, CIRESI, SCHWEYER,
BURGOS, STURLA, KIM, FIEDLER, GREEN, OTTEN AND WAXMAN,
OCTOBER 16, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, OCTOBER 16, 2023

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Office of New Pennsylvanians and providing for
2 its powers and duties; and establishing the Advisory
3 Committee to Office of New Pennsylvanians and providing for
4 its powers, duties and membership.

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1 Section 701. Effective date.

2 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3 hereby enacts as follows:

4 CHAPTER 1
5 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

6 Section 101. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Office of New
8 Pennsylvanians Act.

9 Section 102. Legislative policy and declarations.

10 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) According to the United States Census Bureau, in
12 2018, Pennsylvania ranked 42nd among the 50 states in
13 population growth since 2010, increasing only 0.86%.

14 (2) In 2019, Pennsylvania's 893,167 foreign-born
15 individuals comprised 7% of this Commonwealth's population,
16 an increase of 75.7% since 2000, compared to only 1.2% growth
17 in the United-States-born population.

18 (3) Throughout this Commonwealth's history, immigrants
19 have played a critical role in this Commonwealth's economic,
20 cultural and political growth and success.

21 (4) Policies that promote the attraction, retention and
22 inclusion of immigrants and refugees will help enhance this
23 Commonwealth's economy and diversity, thereby improving the
24 lives of all residents and helping to remove barriers that
25 may undermine immigrants' full potential.

26 (5) Immigrants currently fill skilled positions
27 throughout this Commonwealth's economy and are a vital part
28 of this Commonwealth's economy and tax base. In 2019,
29 immigrant business owners in this Commonwealth generated more
30 than \$1,700,000,000 in business revenue and immigrant

1 spending power increased to \$24,900,000,000.

2 (6) 40% of immigrants in this Commonwealth have a
3 bachelor of arts, bachelor of science or graduate degree,
4 compared to 32% of United-States-born Pennsylvanians.

5 (7) Organizations are providing leadership in this
6 Commonwealth's immigrant integration efforts through programs
7 and services that connect newcomers and longtime
8 Pennsylvanians to economic opportunity.

9 (8) It is essential for this Commonwealth's future that
10 skilled, energetic and entrepreneurial immigrants are
11 attracted, retained and integrated. Immigrants help to
12 bolster this Commonwealth's economy and strengthen the
13 social, civic and cultural fabric.

14 (9) States enforce and provide for many services,
15 licenses and educational and economic opportunities that make
16 it imperative to coordinate the work of state agencies,
17 leverage relationships with partner and nonprofit
18 organizations, and recommend policies and programs that
19 support immigrant inclusion. Immigrants on the path to full
20 civic and economic participation benefit from a welcoming
21 environment and policies that:

22 (i) Increase access to English language instruction
23 and workforce development and employment.

24 (ii) Reduce exploitation and fraud against
25 immigrants.

26 (iii) Connect new Pennsylvanians to legal services
27 and assist on the path to naturalization.

28 (iv) Provide individuals with meaningful access to
29 Commonwealth resources and opportunities regardless of
30 English proficiency.

1 and coordinate among agencies as appropriate.

2 (4) Analyze economic, demographic and other trends
3 impacting immigrants in this Commonwealth and make policy
4 recommendations.

5 (5) Ensure that the Commonwealth is gathering relevant
6 data to inform the Commonwealth's policy making on immigrant
7 issues.

8 (6) Develop strategies to attract, retain and integrate
9 immigrants into this Commonwealth.

10 (7) Convene stakeholders in business development and
11 international trade promotion programs to increase capacity
12 to utilize immigrant contributors.

13 (8) Disseminate information to new and prospective
14 immigrant residents of this Commonwealth who wish to invest
15 capital, launch businesses or apply their skills in this
16 Commonwealth.

17 (9) Convene municipal officials to boost peer learning
18 on increasing immigration in cities of the third class
19 struggling with population loss and economic decline.

20 (10) Convene college and university officials to foster
21 learning on strategies for immigrant and international
22 student retention.

23 (11) Provide matching grant funds for high-quality
24 immigration and economic development programs that can
25 demonstrate corporate or philanthropic investment.

26 (12) Disseminate information about available services to
27 assist new and prospective immigrant residents of this
28 Commonwealth on the path to naturalization.

29 (13) Disseminate information about legal services
30 available to new Pennsylvanians in civil legal matters,

1 including housing, family, immigration and other matters.

2 (14) Disseminate information about English language
3 instruction and resources available to immigrant residents of
4 this Commonwealth.

5 (15) Convene stakeholders in Commonwealth agencies,
6 immigrant-serving organizations and the public to identify
7 and reduce exploitation and fraud against immigrants.

8 (16) Convene stakeholders in Commonwealth agencies,
9 immigrant-serving organizations and the public to promote
10 race, sex, gender, age, income and LGBTQ equity and to
11 identify and reduce inequities.

12 (17) Develop strategies to provide immigrants with
13 meaningful access to Commonwealth resources and opportunities
14 regardless of their level of English proficiency.

15 (18) Communicate with Federal and international
16 stakeholders to support the resettlement process for refugees
17 who have been identified for resettlement in this
18 Commonwealth.

19 (19) Evaluate the success of activities and adjust
20 courses as appropriate.

21 CHAPTER 5

22 ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO

23 OFFICE OF NEW PENNSYLVANIANS

24 Section 501. Establishment of advisory committee.

25 The Advisory Committee to Office of New Pennsylvanians is
26 established within the office and shall serve in an advisory
27 capacity to the office in matters regarding immigrants in this
28 Commonwealth. The advisory committee shall be staffed and
29 administered by the office.

30 Section 502. Membership.

1 (a) Public official members.--The advisory committee shall
2 consist of the following members, who shall serve by virtue of
3 their public position:

4 (1) The secretary or a designee.

5 (2) The Secretary of Administration or a designee.

6 (3) The Secretary of Education or a designee.

7 (4) The Secretary of Health or a designee.

8 (5) The Secretary of Human Services or a designee.

9 (6) The Secretary of Labor and Industry or a designee.

10 (7) The Secretary of Transportation or a designee.

11 (8) The Commissioner of Pennsylvania State Police or a
12 designee.

13 (9) The Attorney General or a designee from the Office
14 of the Attorney General, Bureau of Consumer Protection.

15 (b) Nongovernmental members.--The advisory committee shall
16 consist of nongovernmental members to be appointed by the
17 Governor as follows:

18 (1) Three members from an organization that attracts,
19 retains and integrates immigrants into this Commonwealth's
20 economic, cultural and civic affairs. The advisory committee
21 shall establish a minimum of three regions within this
22 Commonwealth for the purpose of appointing one member from
23 each region.

24 (2) One member from a Pennsylvania chapter of the
25 American Immigration Lawyers Association.

26 (3) One member from an institution of higher education
27 who has a primary focus on immigration issues.

28 (4) One member from the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business
29 and Industry or a similar local advocate for economic
30 improvement.

1 (5) One member with expertise in promoting language
2 access plans.

3 (6) One member from an agency focused on providing
4 English language instruction to speakers of other languages.

5 (7) One member from the Pennsylvania banking sector.

6 (8) One member from a workforce training agency.

7 (9) One member from the health care sector.

8 (10) One member from an agency working to increase
9 immigrants' access to health care services.

10 (11) One member from a human services agency.

11 (12) One member from a refugee resettlement agency.

12 (13) One member from an agency focused on working with
13 immigrants in matters of tenants' rights.

14 (c) Voting.--

15 (1) All members appointed shall hold voting privileges
16 on all matters brought for consideration before the advisory
17 committee.

18 (2) A simple majority of members with current
19 appointments to the advisory committee shall constitute a
20 quorum for the transaction of any business. An action adopted
21 by the majority of the members present at a meeting in which
22 there is a quorum shall be deemed to be an act of the
23 advisory committee.

24 (d) Terms.--

25 (1) The terms of the members under subsection (a) shall
26 be concurrent with their holding of the public office.

27 (2) A member appointed under subsection (b) shall serve
28 a three-year term as long as they represent the interest of
29 the membership class for which they were appointed and shall
30 serve until a successor is appointed.

1 (e) Chairperson.--The secretary shall serve as chairperson
2 of the advisory committee.

3 (f) Expenses of members.--Members of the advisory committee
4 shall receive no compensation for their services. Members who
5 are not employees of State government shall be reimbursed at
6 established Commonwealth rates for expenses incurred in the
7 performance of their duties on the advisory committee.

8 Section 503. Powers and duties of advisory committee.

9 (a) General rule.--The advisory committee shall:

10 (1) Make recommendations to the Governor and the
11 secretary on policies, procedures, regulations and
12 legislation to attract, retain and integrate immigrants into
13 this Commonwealth's society.

14 (2) Serve as the Governor's liaison to new
15 Pennsylvanians on policies, procedures, regulations and
16 legislation that affect immigrants, in order to ensure that
17 State government is accessible, accountable and responsive to
18 the needs of immigrants.

19 (3) Serve as a resource to all departments, commissions
20 and agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction to ensure that
21 government entities are cognizant of the needs of immigrants
22 and that the entities' respective services and programs are
23 accessible to immigrants.

24 (4) Work with the office to monitor the practices of
25 Commonwealth agencies relating to the attraction, retention
26 and integration of immigrants in order to maximize the
27 efficiency and accessibility to State government.

28 (5) Perform other duties as the Governor and secretary
29 may assign in planning for services and programs for
30 immigrants.

1 (b) Studies and reports.--The advisory committee may conduct
2 studies and issue reports upon request and as necessary on
3 issues affecting immigrants in this Commonwealth.

4 (c) Public hearings.--The advisory committee shall conduct
5 at least one public hearing each year to receive testimony and
6 public comments on improving the attraction, retention and
7 integration of immigrants in this Commonwealth.

8 (d) Construction.--Nothing in this section shall be
9 construed to prevent the advisory committee from establishing ad
10 hoc work groups or local committees to assist in research and
11 other duties necessary to carry out the mission of the office.

12 CHAPTER 7

13 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

14 Section 701. Effective date.

15 This act shall take effect in 60 days.