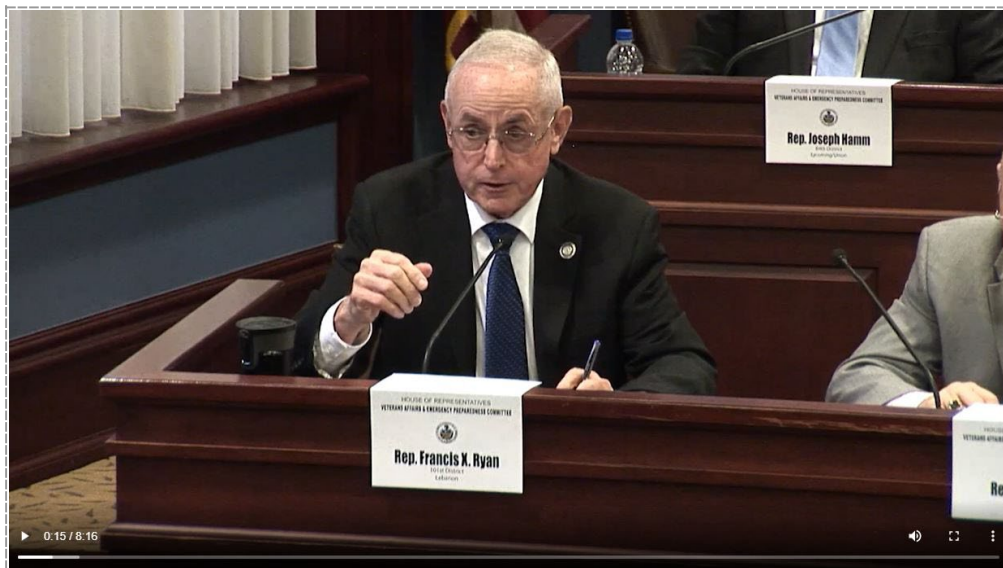


Cutting Demand for Russian Oil



In the wake of Russia's unprovoked and deadly attacks on Ukraine, we are working to ensure we are not providing financial support to Russia and pushing to expand the reach of our natural gas resources to limit reliance on Russia. A resolution is being drafted to call on the governors of New York and New Jersey to end their pipeline bans that prevent Pennsylvania natural gas from reaching the New England states. These states currently rely on liquified natural gas from foreign sources, including Russia. We are also working on legislation that would divest the Commonwealth of any interest in Russian assets. The effort would expand upon [Act 44 of 2010's](#) divestiture of the state Treasury and pension funds from investments related to Iran and Sudan. Finally, we are working on legislation to promote expanded natural gas production in the Commonwealth. I cover this issue in this week's Frankly Speaking podcast. [Listen here.](#)

Committee Hears Alarming Testimony on EMS Crisis

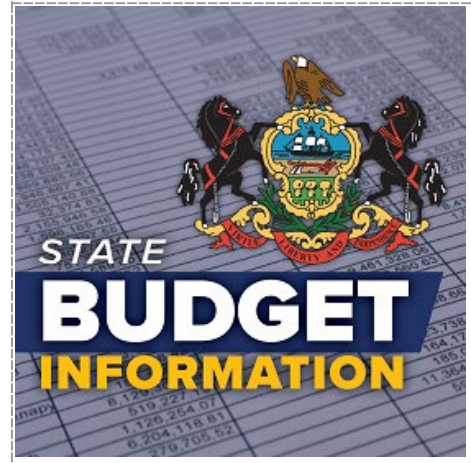


[*Watch Video Here*](#)

Pennsylvania's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are in crisis. For many of our citizens, a quick response by an ambulance can mean the difference between life and death, but we are at a point where a quick response can no longer be guaranteed. The General Assembly recently passed a law to provide \$25 million in federal funds to support grants for these organizations, but more must be done. The House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, of which I am a member, conducted a public hearing this week to learn how to help. I asked Chuck Cressley of the Pennsylvania Ambulance Association for his perspective. To watch, see the video box above.

State Officials Struggle to Explain Wolf Financial Projections

The House Appropriations Committee resumed its annual budget hearings this week with officials of several state departments and agencies as it attempts to make sense of Gov. Tom Wolf's record-high \$43.7 billion spending plan. Many of the department and agency officials who have testified thus far have been unable to explain the disparities between their own budget projections and the governor's. While the Independent Fiscal Office's (IFO) five year forecast calls for an average increase in state spending of 3% per year, the Wolf administration is projecting an average increase



of less than 1% per year over the same five year period. Budget hearings will wrap up next week with education the focus on Monday and Tuesday, the Department of Human Services on Wednesday and finally the budget secretary and governor's executive offices on Thursday. To watch livestreams of the hearings, or to watch archived video of past hearings, [click here](#).

Down a Pint, up a Gallon and Saving Lives



Marking Rare Disease Day



Leaders of the General Assembly's Rare Disease Caucus joined with advocates and members of the PA Rare Disease Advisory Council (PARDAC) at the Capitol on Monday in recognition of Rare Disease Day. The day was dedicated to creating awareness for equity in access to diagnosis and therapies, health care, and quality of life for the 1.2 million Pennsylvanians living with a rare disease. To learn more visit pardac.org.

Expanding Access to Health Care Through Pennie

Pennsylvania's state-based health insurance marketplace, known as Pennie, will now allow low-income Pennsylvanians the ability to enroll in health insurance throughout the year rather than only during the open enrollment period from November to Jan. 15. Previously, citizens could apply for coverage outside of the open enrollment period if they experienced a qualifying life event, such as loss of health coverage, changes in household or residence. The policy change will permit Pennsylvanians with an annual household income equal to or below 150% of the federal poverty level to shop and enroll in health insurance through Pennie at any time. For more information or to enroll, visit pennie.com.

