

Opening Remarks: Public Hearing
Tuesday, November 14 at 10 a.m.
Hearing Room #1 North Office Building
Topic: Reforming the process of electing the lieutenant governor

We are here today to discuss bipartisan legislation that several of my colleagues and I have introduced to reform the current way our lieutenant governor is elected in Pennsylvania. I would also like to give a special thank you to Senator Folmer for adding this issue to his already very busy committee agenda.

We are joined by several of Pennsylvania's former lieutenant governors and former chairmen of both state party committees, all of whom have experienced firsthand the nature of what the role entails and the importance of working with the governor in order to best serve Pennsylvania's citizens.

Over the past several months, we have witnessed the troubled relationship between our current governor and lieutenant governor. The governor and lieutenant governor have openly admitted that they rarely work together or speak to each other for weeks at a time. Let's be honest, this is embarrassing.

Several media sources have documented this dysfunctional relationship between Governor Wolf and Lt. Governor Stack:

- **4/15/17 - Philly Voice:** *"Wolf reportedly kept Stack at arm's length since their election in 2014."*
- **4/12/17 – Pittsburgh Post-Gazette:** *"Mr. Stack said he and the governor last spoke a few weeks ago. "*
- **4/17/17 - The Morning Call:** *"Wolf last met with Stack, a fellow Democrat, in mid-March.*
- **5/10/17 – The Times News:** *"Wolf and Stack seldom appear in public together. In fact, since the gubernatorial election and inauguration in January 2015, you can count on one hand the number of times the two have been at the same official event. They speak to each other but not often."*
- **5/2/17 – The Caucus:**
 - *"It's difficult to see them repairing a relationship that never existed in the first place."*
 - *"It's clear that Wolf wants Stack off the ticket. And he never chose him in the first place, given lieutenant governor and gubernatorial candidates run separately in the primaries."*

How the top two members of the executive branch are currently operating is simply unacceptable. Our goal should be that shared vision, rather than the current division.

A leadership team can't be separated into two warring factions that ignore each other. My church doesn't function that way. My son's old Scout Troop didn't operate like that. My daughter's soccer team couldn't have won any games with that kind of leadership. My wife's family farm would never have survived for four generations under that kind of an ineffective, inefficient, wasteful arrangement. The state of Pennsylvania shouldn't continue to be stuck with the current dysfunctional system that we now see on the second floor of the capitol.

The purpose of today's public hearing is to shed some light on how we can better improve the working relationship between future lieutenant governors and governors in Pennsylvania – in this particular case

– by requiring gubernatorial candidates to select their running mate after the primary election – as proposed in Senate Bill 761.

Under this legislation, the state’s Constitution would be amended to require gubernatorial candidates to select their running mate after the primary election – subject to the approval of their state committees – which is a process very similar to how our presidential candidates have selected their running mates for a long, long time. This bill will require governor and lieutenant governor candidates to first campaign together and then, once elected, work together as a team with a shared vision. The goal is teamwork and cooperation.

As you know, our constitutional amendment process is threefold: (1) it requires the proposal to be approved by the House and the Senate during this legislative session which ends November 2018, (2) it has to be approved again in the next legislative session which begins in 2019 by the House and the Senate, and (3) it would then be placed on the ballot for the approval of Pennsylvania’s voters.

Given the dysfunction between our current governor and lieutenant governor, I do believe that if this question appears on the ballot, Pennsylvania’s voters will approve it, thereby making next year the last time our current, flawed process for electing a lieutenant governor will be utilized.

Should this measure pass, we would be joining thirteen other states — Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio & Utah — that already do this, with the candidate for governor selecting the candidate for lieutenant governor, either before or after the primary.

Another concept we are exploring, which would be introduced as a separate piece of legislation, would be to have the lieutenant governor serve as a member of the governor’s cabinet. The specific office in which the lieutenant governor would serve would be determined by the governor and the lieutenant governor.

Lieutenant governors in several other states are already required to serve in this type of capacity or have been appointed by the governor to serve as a member of their cabinet.

For example:

Kansas

- The governor has the authority to appoint the lieutenant governor to head a state department.

Indiana

- The lieutenant governor serves as the Secretary of Agriculture overseeing the State Department of Agriculture.
- The lieutenant governor serves as the Secretary of Rural Development overseeing the Office of Community and Rural Affairs.

Massachusetts

- The lieutenant governor must be a member of the governor’s council (cabinet).

New Jersey

- The New Jersey state constitution mandates that the governor appoint the lieutenant governor as head of a cabinet-level department or administrative agency within the governor's administration. However, the lieutenant governor is prohibited from being appointed as the state's Attorney General.

Ohio

- The lieutenant governor is considered a member of the governor's cabinet and presides over meetings in the absence of the governor.
- The lieutenant governor may be appointed by the governor to be an administrative department head.

Utah

- The lieutenant governor can perform duties as delegated by the governor including as head of a department (with the consent of the Senate), as chair of any cabinet group, as liaison to the legislature, as liaison to other government official, as personal advisor to the governor, and/or as chair of any board, council, commission, committee, or task force or in lieu of the governor on boards or commissions.

Florida

- The governor may assign the lieutenant governor, without Senate confirmation, the duty of serving as the head of any one department.

Before we begin this public hearing, I will leave you all with a 2014 quote from Professors Terry Madonna and Michael Young: "Much better would be a system that required gubernatorial nominees to name their own running mates — much as presidential nominees now do."

Thank you again, and let us begin.