

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, WAXMAN, BENHAM AND ISAACSON, OCTOBER 16, 2023

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, JUNE 3, 2024

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Office of New Pennsylvanians and providing for
2 its powers and duties; ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF NEW <--
3 PENNSYLVANIANS RESTRICTED ACCOUNT; and establishing the
4 Advisory Committee to Office of New Pennsylvanians and
5 providing for its powers, duties and membership.

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4 Section ~~701~~ 702. Effective date. <--

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 CHAPTER 1

8 PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

9 Section 101. Short title.

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

12 Section 102. Legislative policy and declarations.

13 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

14 (1) According to the United States Census Bureau, in  
15 2018, Pennsylvania ranked 42nd among the 50 states in  
16 population growth since 2010, increasing only 0.86%.

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

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

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

29 (5) Immigrants currently fill skilled positions  
30 throughout this Commonwealth's economy and are a vital part

1 of this Commonwealth's economy and tax base. In 2019,  
2 immigrant business owners in this Commonwealth generated more  
3 than \$1,700,000,000 in business revenue and immigrant  
4 spending power increased to \$24,900,000,000.

5 (6) 40% of immigrants in this Commonwealth have a  
6 bachelor of arts, bachelor of science or graduate degree,  
7 compared to 32% of United-States-born Pennsylvanians.

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

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

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

25 (i) Increase access to English language instruction  
26 and workforce development and employment.

27 (ii) Reduce exploitation and fraud against  
28 immigrants.

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

1 (iv) Provide individuals with meaningful access to  
2 Commonwealth resources and opportunities regardless of  
3 English proficiency.

4 (10) In recognition of these facts and in promotion of  
5 the stated goals, the creation of the Office of New  
6 Pennsylvanians will help improve the lives and economic  
7 prosperity of immigrants and Pennsylvanians generally.

8 Section 103. Definitions.

9 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
10 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
11 context clearly indicates otherwise:

12 "Advisory committee." The Advisory Committee to Office of  
13 New Pennsylvanians.

14 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic  
15 Development of the Commonwealth.

16 "Office." The Office of New Pennsylvanians.

17 "Secretary." The Secretary of Community and Economic  
18 Development of the Commonwealth.

19 CHAPTER 3

20 OFFICE OF NEW PENNSYLVANIANS

21 Section 301. Establishment of office.

22 (A) ESTABLISHMENT.--The Office of New Pennsylvanians is <--  
23 established within the department.

24 (B) ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES AND STAFF.-- <--

25 (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
26 AND STAFF, INCLUDING COUNSEL AND LEGAL STAFF, TO THE OFFICE  
27 AND TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

28 (2) THE OFFICE SHALL REIMBURSE THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE  
29 COST AND EXPENSES OF PROVIDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
30 AND STAFF UNDER PARAGRAPH (1). NO MORE THAN 5% OF THE FUNDING

1 APPROPRIATED ANNUALLY TO THE OFFICE SHALL BE USED FOR  
2 ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND EXPENSES.

3 Section 302. Powers and duties of office.

4 The office shall:

5 (1) Respond to inquiries from Commonwealth agencies, the  
6 media, immigrant-serving organizations and the public about  
7 immigration issues in this Commonwealth.

8 (2) Serve as point of contact for Commonwealth licensing  
9 boards and the Bureau of Professional and Occupational  
10 Affairs.

11 (3) Serve as an information clearinghouse for  
12 Commonwealth agencies on immigration-related policy issues  
13 and coordinate among agencies as appropriate.

14 (4) Analyze economic, demographic and other trends  
15 impacting immigrants in this Commonwealth and make policy  
16 recommendations.

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

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

22 (7) Convene stakeholders in business development and  
23 international trade promotion programs to increase capacity  
24 to utilize immigrant contributors.

25 (8) Disseminate information to new and prospective  
26 immigrant residents of this Commonwealth who wish to invest  
27 capital, launch businesses or apply their skills in this  
28 Commonwealth.

29 (9) Convene municipal officials to boost peer learning  
30 on increasing immigration in cities of the third class

1 struggling with population loss and economic decline.

2 (10) Convene college and university officials to foster  
3 learning on strategies for immigrant and international  
4 student retention.

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

8 (12) Disseminate information about available services to  
9 assist new and prospective immigrant residents of this  
10 Commonwealth on the path to naturalization.

11 (13) Disseminate information about legal services  
12 available to new Pennsylvanians in civil legal matters,  
13 including housing, family, immigration and other matters.

14 (14) Disseminate information about English language  
15 instruction and resources available to immigrant residents of  
16 this Commonwealth.

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

20 (16) Convene stakeholders in Commonwealth agencies,  
21 immigrant-serving organizations and the public to promote  
22 race, sex, gender, age, income and LGBTQ equity and to  
23 identify and reduce inequities.

24 (17) Develop strategies to provide immigrants with  
25 meaningful access to Commonwealth resources and opportunities  
26 regardless of their level of English proficiency.

27 ~~(18) Communicate with Federal and international~~ <--  
28 ~~stakeholders to support the resettlement process for refugees~~  
29 ~~who have been identified for resettlement in this~~  
30 ~~Commonwealth.~~



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

3 (b) Nongovernmental members.--The advisory committee shall  
4 consist of nongovernmental members to be appointed by the  
5 Governor as follows:

6 (1) Three members from an organization that attracts,  
7 retains and integrates immigrants into this Commonwealth's  
8 economic, cultural and civic affairs. The advisory committee  
9 shall establish a minimum of three regions within this  
10 Commonwealth for the purpose of appointing one member from  
11 each region.

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

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

16 (4) One member from the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business  
17 and Industry or a similar local advocate for economic  
18 improvement.

19 (5) One member with expertise in promoting language  
20 access plans.

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

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

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

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

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

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

29 ~~(12) One member from a refugee resettlement agency.~~ <--

30 ~~(13)~~ (12) One member from an agency focused on working <--



1 with immigrants in matters of tenants' rights.

2 (13) ONE MEMBER FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA MANUFACTURERS' <--  
3 ASSOCIATION.

4 (c) Voting.--

5 (1) All members appointed shall hold voting privileges  
6 on all matters brought for consideration before the advisory  
7 committee.

8 (2) A simple majority of members with current  
9 appointments to the advisory committee shall constitute a  
10 quorum for the transaction of any business. An action adopted  
11 by the majority of the members present at a meeting in which  
12 there is a quorum shall be deemed to be an act of the  
13 advisory committee.

14 (d) Terms.--

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

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

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

23 (f) Expenses of members.--Members of the advisory committee  
24 shall receive no compensation for their services. Members who  
25 are not employees of State government shall be reimbursed at  
26 established Commonwealth rates for expenses incurred in the  
27 performance of their duties on the advisory committee.

28 Section 503. Powers and duties of advisory committee.

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

30 (1) Make recommendations to the Governor and the

1 secretary on policies, procedures, regulations and  
2 legislation to attract, retain and integrate immigrants into  
3 this Commonwealth's society.

4 (2) Serve as the Governor's liaison to new  
5 Pennsylvanians on policies, procedures, regulations and  
6 legislation that affect immigrants, in order to ensure that  
7 State government is accessible, accountable and responsive to  
8 the needs of immigrants.

9 (3) Serve as a resource to all departments, commissions  
10 and agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction to ensure that  
11 government entities are cognizant of the needs of immigrants  
12 and that the entities' respective services and programs are  
13 accessible to immigrants.

14 (4) Work with the office to monitor the practices of  
15 Commonwealth agencies relating to the attraction, retention  
16 and integration of immigrants in order to maximize the  
17 efficiency and accessibility to State government.

18 (5) Perform other duties as the Governor and secretary  
19 may assign in planning for services and programs for  
20 immigrants.

21 (b) Studies and reports.--The advisory committee may conduct  
22 studies and issue reports ~~upon request and~~ as necessary on <--  
23 issues affecting immigrants in this Commonwealth.

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

28 (d) Construction.--Nothing in this section shall be  
29 construed to prevent the advisory committee from establishing ad  
30 hoc work groups or local committees to assist in research and

1 other duties necessary to carry out the mission of the office.

2 CHAPTER 7

3 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

4 SECTION 701. APPLICABILITY OF OTHER STATUTES. <--

5 THE FOLLOWING ACTS SHALL APPLY TO THE OFFICE AND THE ADVISORY  
6 COMMITTEE:

7 (1) THE ACT OF JULY 19, 1957 (P.L.1017, NO.451), KNOWN  
8 AS THE STATE ADVERSE INTEREST ACT.

9 (2) THE ACT OF FEBRUARY 14, 2008 (P.L.6, NO.3), KNOWN AS  
10 THE RIGHT-TO-KNOW LAW.

11 (3) THE PROVISIONS OF 65 PA.C.S. CHS. 7 (RELATING TO  
12 OPEN MEETINGS) AND 11 (RELATING TO ETHICS STANDARDS AND  
13 FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE).

14 Section ~~701~~ 702. Effective date. <--

15 This act shall take effect in 60 days.