

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 670 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY HUGHES, TARTAGLIONE, FONTANA, HAYWOOD, KEARNEY,  
COLLETT, CAPPELLETTI, KANE, SCHWANK, MILLER, MUTH, COSTA,  
COMITTA, STREET AND DILLON, MAY 2, 2023

REFERRED TO URBAN AFFAIRS AND HOUSING, MAY 2, 2023

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343, No.176), entitled  
2 "An act relating to the finances of the State government;  
3 providing for cancer control, prevention and research, for  
4 ambulatory surgical center data collection, for the Joint  
5 Underwriting Association, for entertainment business  
6 financial management firms, for private dam financial  
7 assurance and for reinstatement of item vetoes; providing for  
8 the settlement, assessment, collection, and lien of taxes,  
9 bonus, and all other accounts due the Commonwealth, the  
10 collection and recovery of fees and other money or property  
11 due or belonging to the Commonwealth, or any agency thereof,  
12 including escheated property and the proceeds of its sale,  
13 the custody and disbursement or other disposition of funds  
14 and securities belonging to or in the possession of the  
15 Commonwealth, and the settlement of claims against the  
16 Commonwealth, the resettlement of accounts and appeals to the  
17 courts, refunds of moneys erroneously paid to the  
18 Commonwealth, auditing the accounts of the Commonwealth and  
19 all agencies thereof, of all public officers collecting  
20 moneys payable to the Commonwealth, or any agency thereof,  
21 and all receipts of appropriations from the Commonwealth,  
22 authorizing the Commonwealth to issue tax anticipation notes  
23 to defray current expenses, implementing the provisions of  
24 section 7(a) of Article VIII of the Constitution of  
25 Pennsylvania authorizing and restricting the incurring of  
26 certain debt and imposing penalties; affecting every  
27 department, board, commission, and officer of the State  
28 government, every political subdivision of the State, and  
29 certain officers of such subdivisions, every person,  
30 association, and corporation required to pay, assess, or  
31 collect taxes, or to make returns or reports under the laws  
32 imposing taxes for State purposes, or to pay license fees or  
33 other moneys to the Commonwealth, or any agency thereof,

1 every State depository and every debtor or creditor of the  
2 Commonwealth," in additional special funds and restricted  
3 accounts, establishing the Survivor-Centered, Accessible,  
4 Fair and Empowering (SAFE) Housing Trust Fund; and making an  
5 interfund transfer.

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

8 Section 1. Article XVII-A.1 of the act of April 9, 1929  
9 (P.L.343, No.176), known as The Fiscal Code, is amended by  
10 adding a subarticle to read:

11 SUBARTICLE K

12 SURVIVOR-CENTERED, ACCESSIBLE, FAIR AND

13 EMPOWERING (SAFE) HOUSING TRUST FUND

14 Section 1795-A.1. Definitions.

15 The following words and phrases when used in this subarticle  
16 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
17 context clearly indicates otherwise:

18 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency.

19 "Department." The Department of Transportation of the  
20 Commonwealth.

21 "Domestic violence program." As defined in 23 Pa.C.S. § 6102  
22 (relating to definitions). The term includes a culturally  
23 specific organization that has a substantive partnership with a  
24 domestic violence program.

25 "Fund." The Survivor-Centered, Accessible, Fair and  
26 Empowering (SAFE) Housing Trust Fund established under section  
27 1796-A.1.

28 "Housing program." A project designed to provide emergency,  
29 transitional and permanent housing, along with related support  
30 services to facilitate movement toward living as independently  
31 as possible.

32 "Immediate family member." An adoptive child, biological

1 child, stepchild, grandchild, parent, brother, sister,  
2 stepbrother, stepsister, half brother or half sister currently  
3 living with a victim or survivor of domestic violence, sexual  
4 assault, dating violence, human trafficking or stalking.

5 "Rape crisis program." A nonprofit organization or program  
6 which has a primary purpose to provide confidential services to  
7 sexual violence victims, which include the following:

8 (1) Survivor services, such as crisis intervention,  
9 crisis hotlines, counseling and therapy, legal and medical  
10 advocacy.

11 (2) Community services, such as information and  
12 referrals, prevention education, community awareness,  
13 professional training and outreach and institutional advocacy  
14 in legal, medical, educational, housing and employment areas.

15 "Target population." Victims and survivors of domestic  
16 violence, sexual assault, dating violence, human trafficking and  
17 stalking and their immediate family members.

18 Section 1796-A.1. Survivor-Centered, Accessible, Fair and  
19 Empowering (SAFE) Housing Trust Fund.

20 (a) Establishment.--The Survivor-Centered, Accessible, Fair  
21 and Empowering (SAFE) Housing Trust Fund is established as a  
22 separate fund in the State Treasury.

23 (b) Purpose.--The fund is established for the following  
24 purposes:

25 (1) To provide the target population with access to  
26 emergency, transitional and permanent housing programs in  
27 order to reduce homelessness and housing instability. Housing  
28 programs and services shall be available to the target  
29 population regardless of an individual's sex, gender identity  
30 or sexual orientation.

1           (2) To promote a policy of housing as a right, rather  
2           than requiring survivors to demonstrate housing readiness as  
3           a prerequisite for obtaining permanent housing.

4 Section 1797-A.1. Sources of revenue.

5           (a) Transfer.--On the effective date of this subsection, the  
6           sum of \$1,000,000 shall be transferred from the General Fund to  
7           the fund.

8           (b) Additional surcharge.--

9           (1) In addition to any fee, charge or cost authorized by  
10           law, an additional fee of \$10 shall be charged and collected  
11           by the recorder of deeds and clerks of court or by any  
12           official designated to perform similar functions on each  
13           filing of a deed or mortgage.

14           (2) All money received under paragraph (1) shall be  
15           transferred by the recorder of deeds and clerks of court  
16           collecting the fee to the State Treasurer for deposit into  
17           the fund.

18           (c) Contributions.--

19           (1) Within one year of the effective date of this  
20           paragraph, the department shall provide for all of the  
21           following:

22           (i) The ability of an individual renewing a driver's  
23           license or identification card electronically through the  
24           department's publicly accessible Internet website to make  
25           a contribution of \$5 to the fund.

26           (ii) The ability of a person renewing a vehicle  
27           registration electronically through the department's  
28           publicly accessible Internet website to make a  
29           contribution of \$5 to the fund.

30           (2) The contributions shall be implemented as follows:

1           (i) A contribution under paragraph (1) shall be  
2           added, as appropriate, to the regular fee for a renewal  
3           of a driver's license or identification card and a  
4           renewal of a vehicle registration.

5           (ii) A contribution under paragraph (1) may be made  
6           for each renewal of a driver's license or identification  
7           card and each renewal of a vehicle registration.

8           (3) Contributions under paragraph (1) shall be used  
9           exclusively for the purposes of the fund under section 1796-  
10          A.1(b).

11          (4) The department shall determine on a monthly basis  
12          the total amount collected under this subsection and report  
13          that amount to the State Treasurer. The State Treasurer shall  
14          transfer that amount from the Motor License Fund to the fund.

15          (5) The fund shall reimburse the Motor License Fund for  
16          the actual costs incurred by the department in the  
17          administration of paragraph (1).

18          (6) The department shall provide adequate information  
19          concerning the contribution to the fund in its instructions  
20          for the renewal applicants under paragraph (1). The  
21          information shall include the listing of an address furnished  
22          by the agency to which contributions may be sent by  
23          individuals wishing to make additional contributions.

24          (d) Other contributions.--Any grants, gifts, donations and  
25          other payments from an individual or government entity may be  
26          accepted as a contribution to the fund.

27          Section 1798-A.1. Use of fund.

28          (a) Authorization.--

29                 (1) The agency shall administer the fund and have the  
30                 power to allocate revenue from the fund for any purpose

1 consistent with this subarticle.

2 (2) The agency shall allocate revenue from the fund to  
3 reimburse the Motor License Fund as provided under  
4 section 1797-A.1(c) (5).

5 (b) Grants.--

6 (1) The agency shall allocate revenue from the fund to  
7 provide grants to domestic violence programs or rape crisis  
8 programs that operate housing programs for the target  
9 population. A domestic violence program or rape crisis  
10 program receiving a grant under this paragraph shall offer  
11 any of the following to the target population:

12 (i) Affordable housing.

13 (ii) Relocation services.

14 (iii) Rent or rental subsidies.

15 (iv) Stipends for security deposits, furniture and  
16 any other housing-related needs.

17 (v) Financing options to facilitate homeownership.

18 (vi) Any other service determined by the agency to  
19 provide housing options.

20 (2) When allocating revenue from the fund under  
21 paragraph (1), the agency shall address and identify  
22 geographical areas where target populations have been  
23 underserved, disadvantaged and prevented from accessing safe,  
24 stable and permanent housing.

25 (c) Operation.--

26 (1) The agency shall adopt a statement of policy  
27 consistent with this subarticle within 60 days of the  
28 effective date of this paragraph. The statement of policy  
29 shall be transmitted as a notice to the Legislative Reference  
30 Bureau for publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, but

1 shall not be subject to review under any of the following:

2 (i) Section 205 of the act of July 31, 1968  
3 (P.L.769, No.240), referred to as the Commonwealth  
4 Documents Law.

5 (ii) Sections 204(b) and 301(10) of the act of  
6 October 15, 1980 (P.L.950, No.164), known as the  
7 Commonwealth Attorneys Act.

8 (iii) The act of June 25, 1982 (P.L.633, No.181),  
9 known as the Regulatory Review Act.

10 (2) At a minimum, the statement of policy shall provide  
11 information on the maintenance of the fund, the criteria used  
12 by the agency to determine eligibility for the allocation of  
13 revenue from the fund and the procedures by which a program  
14 may request funding.

15 (3) No less than once a year, the agency shall review  
16 the statement of policy.

17 (4) The agency may solicit and accept gifts, donations,  
18 legacies and other revenues for deposit into the fund from  
19 any person or entity, including a government entity.

20 (d) Report.--Within one year of the effective date of this  
21 subsection, and every year thereafter, the agency shall submit a  
22 report to the chairperson and minority chairperson of the  
23 Appropriations Committee of the Senate, the chairperson and  
24 minority chairperson of the Appropriations Committee of the  
25 House of Representatives, the chairperson and minority  
26 chairperson of the Urban Affairs and Housing Committee of the  
27 Senate and the chairperson and minority chairperson of the Urban  
28 Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. The report  
29 shall specify all of the following:

30 (1) The revenues and expenditures of the fund in the

1 prior fiscal year.

2 (2) The name of each program that has received money  
3 from the fund and the number of individuals assisted.

4 (3) The number of individual grants awarded and the  
5 county of residence of the grantees.

6 (4) A breakdown of total money spent by county, type of  
7 services provided and outcomes related to housing permanency.

8 (e) Audit.--The Auditor General shall conduct an audit of  
9 the revenues and expenditures of the fund no later than three  
10 years after the effective date of this subsection. The Auditor  
11 General shall conduct subsequent audits of the revenues and  
12 expenditures of the fund no more than once every three years  
13 from the date of the preceding audit. The Auditor General shall  
14 submit a report of each audit to the Governor and the  
15 chairperson and minority chairperson of the Appropriations  
16 Committee of the Senate and the chairperson and minority  
17 chairperson of the Appropriations Committee of the House of  
18 Representatives.

19 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.