



WELCOME TODD EACHUS, NEW BCAP PRESIDENT

HARRISBURG, Pa. – The Broadband Cable Association of Pennsylvania's (BCAP) Board of Directors has named 24-year industry veteran Todd L. Eachus as its new President, effective June 28. Eachus becomes only the fourth President in the Association's 64-year history, succeeding Daniel Tunnel who retired June 4 after leading the Harrisburg-based trade society since 2001.

For more than two decades, Eachus has represented the cable industry before local, state and federal policymakers, advocating for its ongoing expansion of digital products as it evolved into the nation's leading

provider of broadband services. While serving as Director of Government Affairs for several cable operators, Eachus led legislative operations while securing and maintaining franchise agreements and community impact programs.

"It truly is an honor to have an opportunity to lead BCAP, especially during this time," said Eachus. "Broadband is an economic driver, delivering entertainment, information, education, work and health care to millions of Pennsylvanians. BCAP member companies' investments and innovation have created these opportunities, and we look forward to working with policymakers at all levels of government to ensure that continues."

"We're thrilled to have Todd take the reins and lead our organization through one of the most challenging periods in our long history," said BCAP Chairman Fran Bradley, Atlantic Broadband. "His decades of experience, and relationships in the legislative arena and with our key audiences, will very much benefit our member companies that provide broadband services to nearly 3 million Pennsylvania residents and businesses."

Prior to joining the cable industry, Eachus served as a press secretary and senior legislative aide in the U.S. House of Representatives. While in this role, he managed a variety of legislative issues including telecommunications, defense, foreign affairs and judicial affairs. A ten-year veteran of the U.S. Navy, Eachus accumulated more than 2,000 flight hours while flying in S-3 Viking jet aircrafts, including 450 carrier landings. His military service included time in the Persian Gulf aboard the USS America during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

A resident of Delaware County, Eachus has served eight years as a board director – and two as board president – of Marple Newton School District. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Municipal League and Spanish American Civic Association, and the Advocacy Committee of the Lancaster (PA) Chamber. Eachus previously served as the Chairman of the Cable Television Association of Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia. During his career, he has authored several articles examining news media and foreign policy, and has served as an adjunct professor of Political Communications at George Washington University, his alma mater.

Eachus and his wife Karen reside in Newtown Square.

The Broadband Cable Association of Pennsylvania (BCAP), a member-driven organization based in Harrisburg, actively promotes broadband cable and telecommunications industry issues in Pennsylvania. BCAP – the nation’s first state cable association – represents cable operators, programmers and equipment suppliers that collectively provide service to nearly 3 million Pennsylvania households and businesses. – **BCAP news release**



June 28, 2021

Next TV
[Atlantic](#)
[Broadband](#)
[Working to](#)
[Restore Services,](#)
[Establish WiFi](#)
[Hotspots in](#)
[Aftermath of](#)
[Champlain Towers](#)
[Collapse](#)

Pushing for broadband expansion for all Pennsylvanians is not something new for me — several years ago, I realized our state had a serious problem regarding reliable, affordable access and I began to further investigate why, as a state, we had fallen so behind. Since the pandemic, access and connectivity issues have only exacerbated. The work to make this happen certainly isn't without its challenges, as significant infrastructure and investments are needed. I remain undeterred in my efforts to ensure each one of us is connected — not just in certain parts of our great state.

Telecompetitor
[New York \\$15 Low-](#)
[Income Broadband](#)
[Requirement](#)
[Suffers Another](#)
[Blow](#)

The House Democratic Policy Committee held hearings in the spring to discuss how we can better connect our communities and effectively bridge this digital divide. It's imperative that we do everything possible to solve connectivity issues for our school students, who are unable to complete virtual assignments from home, and our college students, who can't access online classes. We also know that this lack of reliable access can — and has — adversely impacted our economic growth.

Bloomberg
[Netflix Is a Wall](#)
[Street Banker's](#)
[Dream](#)

Companies are less likely to consider locating or relocating to Pennsylvania. Telemedicine has been vital during the past year to help physicians monitor and provide care to their patients. Sadly, in many parts of Pennsylvania, the broadband connectivity that makes this possible is the exception rather than the norm. With more of us working and learning from home than ever before, we must do more to connect everyone.

The Hill
[Google to warn](#)
[users about](#)
[unreliable](#)
[information during](#)
['rapidly evolving'](#)
[events](#)

I've introduced a [bill](#) to establish a broadband authority to oversee and support the deployment of broadband services statewide. This authority would identify and provide the funds needed to ensure reliable access. In addition, a separate measure I've authored would allow municipalities to offer broadband and allow an electric utility or other electric supplier to install and maintain the infrastructure to support broadband access. It would also increase broadband speeds to meet Federal Communications Commission minimum standards.

Next TV
[Sinclair's](#)
[Streaming RSNs](#)
[and Warner's CNN](#)
[Plus May Be Pay](#)
[TV's Biggest](#)
[Disruptors](#)

Despite the passage of measures back in 1993 and 2004 to ensure all regions of our state have access to a modern broadband telecommunications network by 2015, it's clear we have failed to act. We are doing our residents a disservice if we allow this inaction to continue. As I've said numerous times, you cannot compete if you cannot connect. If we are to be successful in helping our students, attracting businesses, and providing cutting-edge medicine, we need to be truly connected, regardless of where we live. We must put

TVNewsCheck
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[Top TV Digital](#)
[Execs' Priorities](#)

The Hill
[Will streaming kill](#)
[broadcast & cable](#)
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Pennlive
No tax cuts for all,
but tax breaks for
some in
Pennsylvania
budget package

partisanship aside and work together to make this happen.
Pennsylvanians deserve no less. — **Op-ed by Rep. Pam Snyder (D-Greene) in *Erie Times-News***

Republicans just passed [legislation that would overhaul Pennsylvania's elections](#). The Democratic governor [is set to veto it](#).

And then we'll move on to the next chapter of the escalating voting wars that have engulfed politics [in Harrisburg](#) and [across the country](#), with at least one thing clear: As Democrats and Republicans fight over how ballots are cast and counted, few acknowledge just how complicated running elections is, and how unpredictable the impact of major changes can be. Republicans in the state Senate gave final approval Friday afternoon to [a House-passed bill](#) that would implement stricter voter identification requirements, in-person early voting starting in 2025, signature verification for mail ballots, and other major changes.

Even though voter fraud is exceptionally rare, much of the legislation focuses on tightening election security and could raise some barriers to voting — including through its voter ID rules, restrictions on mail ballot return options, and signature verification requirements. But it's also not simply a partisan grenade: The ID requirements are weaker than what other states have enacted, it would codify things like mail ballot drop boxes into law, and create more explicit rules for ["curing" ballots on which voters made minor mistakes](#).

Even some opponents credit Republicans for political savvy in crafting a bill that's less easily dismissed as voter suppression than measures in other states. "It's complex, but it's a smart, strategic bill," said Khalif Ali, the head of Common Cause Pennsylvania, a good-government advocacy group opposed to the legislation. "It's definitely the wolf in sheep's clothing. There are some decent pieces in there that we can't say honestly ... that we would be against."

Ali spoke approvingly of increased poll worker pay and changes that would allow processing of mail ballots before Election Day — something [elections officials have long requested](#) and that [could have prevented the days-long wait for results last fall](#). But he also decried signature verification for mail ballots and other provisions as making it harder for some people to vote. "Item by item, there really are good things in the bill," said Al Schmidt, the lone Republican on Philadelphia's elections board, who became a target of [threats and harassment](#) for pushing back against [lies and conspiracy theories about the 2020 election](#). "And then there are other things in the bill that are clearly intended to indulge in ... this fantasy of widespread voter fraud."

Some of the bill's proposals may affect different voters in different ways. For example, cutting off mail ballot applications earlier — 15 days before Election Day instead of seven — could mean some voters who would have requested ballots in those last two weeks now won't be able to vote by mail. But the current seven-day window is so tight it [doesn't match Postal Service standards](#) and already [disenfranchises thousands of voters](#).

Making matters more complicated, the bill would make many changes at once. But voter behavior is complex, election law is nuanced, election administration is challenging, and the real-world effects of changes can

defy expectations. “It’s the question of unintended consequences, in part, and the interactions between these different kinds of provisions,” said Dan Hopkins, a political scientist at the University of Pennsylvania. “...These policies can be hard to evaluate, because people may react to them in unexpected ways.” Take voter identification requirements, which a decade ago helped spark an earlier round of voting wars. That included Pennsylvania enacting one of the nation’s strictest mandates in 2012 — a law courts struck down as unconstitutional before it took effect.

Voter ID has long been a political flashpoint, but its impact can be easily misunderstood, partly because it doesn’t take place in a vacuum. A strict requirement can make it harder for some already marginalized groups, including poor and low-income voters, to cast ballots. But it can also spark backlash and mobilization efforts, boosting turnout. Just think about all the time — and money — spent last year on voter education campaigns to prevent [“naked ballots”](#) and ensure mail ballots were returned on time.

Or consider in-person early voting, which the Republican proposal would allow for a six-day period beginning in 2025, after the next presidential race. That may seem like a major expansion of voting access. But it may do little to expand the electorate — especially when mail voting is widely available, like in Pennsylvania — instead mostly making it more convenient for people who would have voted anyway.

Then there’s the challenge of actually implementing election law in 67 different counties run by 67 different elections offices. Sparse funding, staffing, and other logistical constraints affect how policies are carried out. That’s already the case with [drop boxes and satellite elections offices](#), which some counties began using last year to help voters request and return mail ballots. Scarcer resources mean some counties scaled back those options this year, including Philadelphia, which went from having 17 such locations to just one.

[Republicans railed against and sued over drop boxes](#) last year, since they aren’t explicitly mentioned in current law, but courts upheld their use. While some prefer to ban them, the bill would explicitly allow for ballot return locations — while also adding new restrictions. It would require them to be staffed by poll workers from both parties, video recorded, and open only from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. the week before Election Day, instead of 24/7 for weeks, as some counties have done. Setting up drop boxes under such rules may not be worth it for some counties.

And while Republicans tout the inclusion of drop boxes and say the requirements would make their use more uniform, it would likely result in some patchwork of implementation. Counties wouldn’t actually be required to have drop boxes at all. It would also limit the large, densely populated and more Democratic counties that would benefit most from their use. Counties wouldn’t be allowed more than one box per 100,000 residents and would be limited to 10 total, no matter their population.

Philadelphia, which has 1.5 million residents, had 14 drop boxes for this year’s primary. “It’s the arbitrary limits I don’t understand,” Schmidt said, “particularly since they affect Philadelphia and it’s in a disproportionate and negative way.” There also could be small, overlooked details that end up having big implications.

Inner secrecy envelopes, for example, had long been required for absentee ballots, to give voters anonymity after their ballots were removed from mailing envelopes. Some counties would nevertheless count “naked ballots” missing those secrecy envelopes, erring on the side of counting votes. But when the state Supreme Court ruled last year that [naked ballots had to be rejected](#), the seemingly small detail became a major disenfranchisement concern.

Other provisions can seem big but end up having little apparent impact. [The 2019 bipartisan election overhaul that expanded mail voting](#) also removed straight-ticket voting, the option for voters to pick candidates from the same party for every race on the ballot at once. [Democrats decried it as suppressive](#), some voted against the bill because of it, and at one point [Wolf vetoed it](#). But the issue has quietly disappeared from the discussion.

So, it's complicated. After Wolf vetoes the bill, the fight will almost certainly move from the Capitol building in Harrisburg to the campaign trail across the state, especially in the 2022 governor's race. Both sides will say they need to win the governor's mansion to protect elections and defend democracy.

And the voting wars will continue. – *Philadelphia Inquirer*

The Pennsylvania General Assembly has passed [a \\$40.8 billion state budget](#) with a fair amount of bipartisan support for the investments it makes in schools and continuing economic relief from the COVID-19 pandemic. On Friday, the budget passed the House on a 140-61 vote, and the Senate approved it by a 43-7 vote. The budget calls for no increase in personal or business taxes and directs more money to schools and human services programs. Supporters said the plan meets critical needs and offers a financial safety net for the future.

Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf plans to sign the budget next week. Republicans, who control the General Assembly, pushed to save most of the \$7 billion in federal COVID-19 recovery aid. Some Democratic lawmakers supported the plan, but they didn't conceal their disappointment over the decision to save most of that federal assistance. Still, the spending plan is finished with relatively little drama days before the new fiscal year begins on July 1. “Our economy has weathered the pandemic, and now is roaring forward. We are a commonwealth on the comeback,” Wolf said in a statement. “This budget will help our state move forward and rebuild a strong, equitable economy that works for Pennsylvanians.”

The governor said he was especially pleased with the sizable increase in the amount of funding public schools, even though the budget will include less money than he originally proposed. “This budget makes a historic investment in education so our students get the knowledge and skills they deserve,” Wolf said. “Pennsylvania provides almost \$2 billion more a year for education than when I took office. Students now have access to better technology, resources and opportunities and we are providing more help to distressed school districts.”

Total spending is up 2.6% over this year's total estimated spending of \$39.8 billion, padded with the help of federal COVID-19 relief dollars and surging state tax collections, according to House Republican Appropriations Committee documents. Compared to the 2020-21 adopted budget, however, spending is up 7.8%. “This year's budget

reflects resilience,” said Senate Majority Leader Kim Ward, R-Westmoreland County. “It’s not a statement of a new normal but it’s a declaration of rejecting restrictions and returning to life as we once knew it.”

Ward said the budget “transitions Pennsylvanians out of crisis and positions us, the commonwealth, for success.” During the floor debates, members of the Republican majorities hailed the plan as one that - with the help of ample federal support - contains targeted investments in schools, highway projects, child care services and public safety. Republicans also hailed the plan because it socks billions of dollars away as a hedge against possible future dips in tax collections.

In that, members of the GOP majority admitted they are still scarred by the political calamity that befell former Gov. Tom Corbett in 2011. He took office right after the state spent down a much smaller amount of federal budget relief in 2009 and 2010, and oversaw a budget that saw net funding for public schools drop by more than \$1 billion in his first budget. The school funding cut that year was a problem for everyone, and the decision put an anchor around Corbett that the Republican governor was never able to shake. It helped lead to the election of Wolf, his Democrat opponent, in 2014. “We cannot afford to repeat past mistakes,” said Rep. Stan Saylor, R-York County and the chair of the House Appropriations Committee as the House debate started. “This budget is a fiscally responsible path forward for Pennsylvania.”

Sen. Pat Browne, R-Lehigh County and chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, agreed this budget is reflective of lessons learned from that experience more than 10 years ago “by ensuring we are responsible not only with how we use federal stimulus money but also that the decisions we are making today put us on a solid fiscal ground for the future, surging forward from a pandemic of global proportions.” For all the talk of frugality, the plan still is the first Pennsylvania state budgets that crashed through the \$40 billion barrier.

The lion’s share of the spending growth is going to support schools and pay for higher human service costs associated with Pennsylvania’s aging population and the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. The budget includes an increase of \$300 million for basic education, with \$100 million of that targeted to the 100 historically underfunded school districts which includes some in both urban and rural areas of the state. That boosts the overall spending on basic education to more than \$7 billion.

Special education would receive a \$50 million increase, boosting that budget line to \$1.24 billion, while preschool and Head Start programs will receive a \$30 million increase, to \$311.5 million. When all the K-12 budget lines are combined, funding for schools reaches a record high of \$13.55 billion. Schools also will get a one-time hit of \$350 million from federal relief dollars that can be spent to help students cover educational subjects that got left behind in the disjointed school year through summer enrichment, after-school and other programs.

The budget also includes a \$40 million increased in the state’s Educational Improvement Tax Credit program, boosting that to \$225 million. This 20-year-old program, which routinely is over-subscribed, gives tax credits to businesses that donate to private-school scholarships and innovative educational programming. Some \$175

million of that amount would be directed to businesses that support scholarship programs.

Senate President Pro Tempore Jake Corman, R- Centre County, was particularly pleased with this increase in the state's school choice program. He credited his caucus for leading the charge to raise the funding to a historic high. "I thought it was clearly called for, clearly appropriate," Corman said. "We're going to help kids find the best educational opportunity that their family thinks they deserve. It shouldn't be determined by your zip code. It shouldn't be determined by your ability to pay."

Some Democrats said they'd vote for the budget because it contains a lot that the state needs. But even in voting for it, House Democratic Appropriations Committee Chairman Matt Bradford of Montgomery County blasted the majority Republicans for adopting a "fiscal fetal position" that contains an equal number of missed opportunities. "No investment. No stimulus," Bradford scolded. "No plan for broadband in Greene County. No way to connect our kids to the Internet during a pandemic. No real idea on how to move Pennsylvania forward."

Funding for human services is the other big growth area in the budget, due in part to fully account for medical assistance costs that were partially funded in other ways last year and to cover unexpected growth from the pandemic. The state Department of Human Services budget lines, which covers medical assistance programs, by itself is set to grow by \$1.8 billion, or 11.7 percent. The plan calls for allocating \$282 million in federal relief funds to help nursing homes, assisted living and personal care homes to cover pandemic-related costs. It also includes more funding to provide services to 832 people with intellectual disabilities and to provide home and community-based services to 501 more senior citizens.

Rep. Jesse Topper, a Republican from Bedford County, said the budget makes a lot of big investments that in a normal year, would be seen as lavish spending. The plans include \$279 million in federal relief funding for roads and bridges; \$282 million for nursing homes; and \$372 million to continue to deal with the public health and emergency response costs stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. But Topper said the large savings account shows that lawmakers are also taking good care of the taxpaying public, by guarding against the need for future tax increases if the fiscal bubble pops. "I've heard throughout the debate this evening about money that has been given, whether it be from the president, the Congress or from us," Topper said. "Let's make no mistake. All of that money is generated through taxes. Nobody in Washington D.C. or here at the Capitol sold cookies or held a bake sale to raise this money.... "It's not our money. We are simply stewards of it, and this budget shows that we are good stewards of it."

Between the deposit into the state's Rainy Day fund - the state's major cash reserve for day-to-day operations - and the stockpiling of more than \$5 billion in federal funds into a separate restricted account, the state will likely be sitting on more than \$8 billion for the coming years. Rep. Jordan Harris, the House Democratic Whip from Philadelphia, pounced on Topper's remarks. Harris said that by spending just \$1 billion more of the reserves that are being squirreled away, the Legislature could have put all of Pennsylvania's state school aid into a fair funding formula that Democrats have said would end years of inequitable funding of public schools. "You're right," Harris said in response to Topper. "It isn't our

money. Which is why we should be giving the money back to Pennsylvanians in property tax relief. That's why we should be giving the money back to Pennsylvanians by funding their schools. This is a travesty."

Several Senate Democrats also picked up on that theme in voicing their opposition to holding on to such a large sum. Senate Democratic Appropriations Committee Chairman Vince Hughes of Philadelphia voted for the budget because he said it moves the ball forward in areas. "However at the same time, I cannot ignore the glaring fact that when this document is done, when this budget is voted for, when it's signed into law, there will be \$5 billion sitting in the state's Treasury," Hughes said.

"This budget is sadly not just an opportunity missed," said Sen. Katie Muth, D-Montgomery County. Sen. Nikil Saval, D-Philadelphia, was among the Democratic lawmakers earlier in the week who stood on the Capitol steps alongside Pennsylvanians begging the General Assembly to spend much of the federal relief money to help people still hurting from the pandemic. So he also saw setting aside money into the Rainy Day Fund as wrongheaded. "Let us be clear that this withholds a lifeline to the millions of people across our state drowning from 16 months of torrential downpour," Saval said. "This rainy day is happening right now." He said it could have been spent on fixing toxic schools, giving hazard pay to front line workers, and more equitable funding for schools.

In the House, 105 Republicans and 35 Democrats voted yes, and 54 Democrats and seven Republicans opposed the plan. In the Senate, 28 Republicans, an independent who caucuses and 14 Democrats voted yes, while seven Democrats voted no. -- **Pennlive**

