



Pennsylvania Department of the

AUDITOR GENERAL

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Auditor General DePasquale Prepared to Advance Efforts to Help Address State's Fiscal Woes; Outlines Second Term Agenda

Discusses six areas of focus for performance audits in second term

HARRISBURG – Auditor General Eugene DePasquale said today the state's financial challenges and voters' demand for change put greater importance on his office's fiscal watchdog role.

"In the midst of ongoing budget deficits, there are still enormous problems facing our state that need to be addressed — education, opioids, jobs and infrastructure," DePasquale said during a news conference to outline his agenda for the next four years.

"In addition to the thousands of audits we do each year to improve government efficiency, my team will focus on performance audits in six broad areas to help make government more accountable and more efficient to reduce the burden on residents."

The six broad areas of focus include:

- **Effectiveness of drug rehab options** — To help address the dramatic increase in opioid addiction and deaths, auditors are already working to determine if three state agencies are monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of opioid-related drug treatment initiatives.
- **Ensuring state and county offices protect children** — An audit of ChildLine helped the Department of Human Services fix a serious problem with the child abuse hotline. It also brought to light a major problem facing county Children and Youth Service offices across the state. DePasquale said his office is already working on a special report to address the caseworker shortage and high turn-over rate in these offices that are entrusted with protecting children.
- **College affordability** — DePasquale noted that it is getting to the point where the average middle-class family is soon going to be priced out of college. Audits of colleges and universities, such as the first-ever performance audit of Penn State happening now, will examine, among other things, efforts by schools to control costs and hold the line on tuition increases.
- **Job retraining** — During his first term, DePasquale's team looked at the effectiveness of the Department of Community and Economic Development's job creation programs. In his second term, auditors will focus on the effectiveness of the state's job retraining programs, DePasquale said, noting that, "We need retraining programs that provide workers with the skills they need to succeed in today's job market."
- **Infrastructure improvements** — To maximize the effectiveness of every dollar invested in infrastructure in Pennsylvania, auditors will look at PennDOT and conduct another audit of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission.
- **Economic issues for seniors** — While property tax relief continues to fall flat in the Capitol, auditors will make sure schools use education funds efficiently. "Over the next four years my team is going to be looking for other ways to help the state address the property tax issue,"

DePasquale said. “As the governor and General Assembly attempt to address the state’s fiscal mess, increasing pressure is put on property taxes to pay for schools, public safety and other government services.”

“We will continue to uncover waste, fraud and abuse of state funds,” DePasquale said, noting that over the last four years, his office set an example of government efficiency by streamlining its operation and identifying more than \$320 million in misspent or potentially recoverable state funds. More than \$230 million of that was in local school districts and charter schools.

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