

DEPARTMENT OF AGING BUDGET HEARING WRAP

Tuesday, March 10, 2026



General Overview:

Pennsylvania Department of Aging Secretary Jason Kavulich and senior staff from the department testified before the House Appropriations Committee today. House Republicans focused their questions on administrative changes within the department and how the department is working to combat elder abuse.

Key Takeaways:

- The Department of Aging is funded through the Pennsylvania Lottery Fund, not the General Fund.
 - This year, the Governor is proposing a total budget of \$505.2 million from the Lottery Fund, an increase of \$12 million, or 2.5%, over the current fiscal year.
- House Members are concerned with the prevalence of elder abuse in Pennsylvania, especially with the growth in our aging population.
 - Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), who receive oversight from the department, are the front line in combating elder abuse.
 - Members learned that the department has implemented the Comprehensive Aging Performance Evaluation (CAPE) to provide oversight of AAAs and ensure proper investigations of elder abuse.
 - Members learned that at least four counties are entering formal review for poor performance, defined as a compliance score below 75%.
 - Secretary Kavulich also contradicted himself by claiming that Aging does review the cause of death in cases of elder abuse resulting in death. He later walked back those claims when pressed by House Republicans. He has spent three years claiming they do not have the authority to investigate deaths.
 - When asked about accountability for AAAs who fail to appropriately investigate elder abuse, Secretary Kavulich was adamant that no AAA-in-violation would lose baseline funding.
 - Secretary Kavulich eventually said noncompliant AAAs may not be eligible for grants.
- Secretary Kavulich repeatedly claimed his office is unable to complete tasks to the satisfaction of Members' questions because their administrative funding is low compared to other agencies. At no point did the secretary offer a solution or propose a funding stream that could fulfill his needs.

Notable Q&A:



Rep. Eric Nelson asks Secretary Kavulich for an update on oversight of AAA's in investigating elder abuse.

Rep. Jeff Olsommer counters Secretary Kavulich's claims that the department can determine if elder abuse may have contributed to a death.



Rep. Josh Kail asks for clarity on the department's role in AAAs' investigations into elder abuse.

