

2026 PA State Legislative Recruitment

Recruit the Map

Agenda



1. Why Care?

2. We Gotta Compete!

3. Petitions & Timeline

4. Recruitment

5. Build Your List

6. Next Steps

Introduction

Oliver Truong, co-ED of Lead PA

- **From Lancaster, live in Philly**
- **Experience in PA, CA, MI**
- **Recruits at state and local level**
- **Advise other states with recruitment & training**
- **Catless cat person**

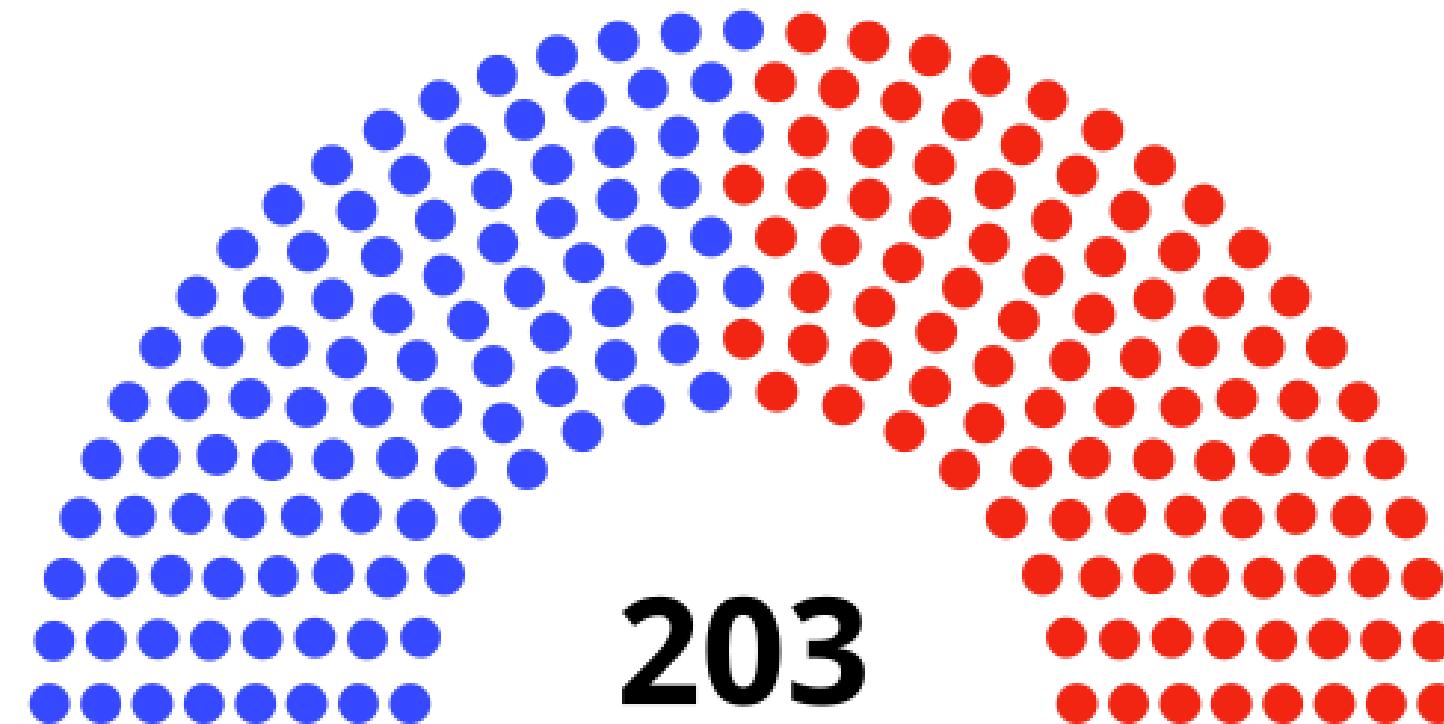


Why Care?

Why Care?

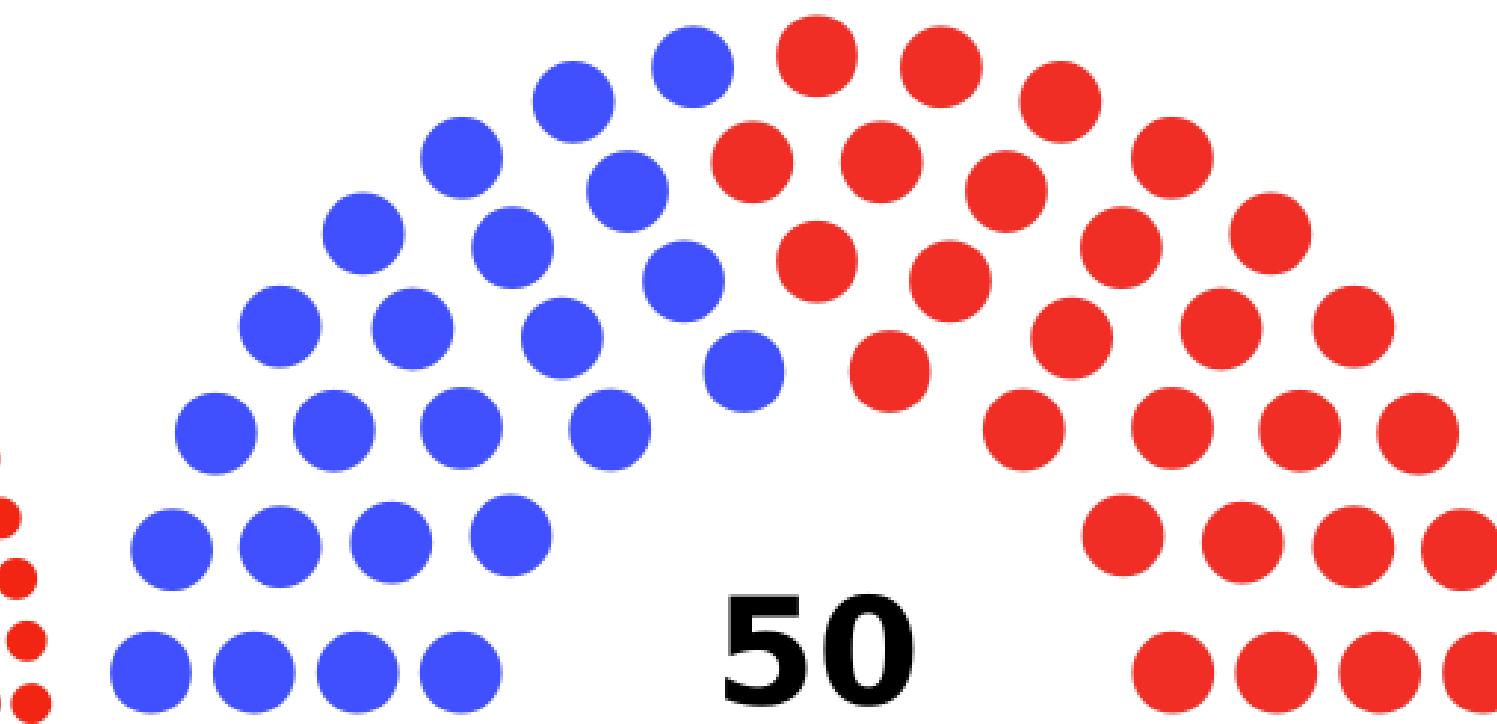
Chamber control matters

House



102 D - 101 R

Senate



23 D - 27 R

Why Care?

Harrisburg decides a lot, or doesn't

Budget Impasse

- + \$565 million Fair Funding for school districts
- + Earned income tax credit
- - Budget 4 months late putting school districts and social services at risk
- - No permanent transit funding
- - PA withdraws from Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

Why Care?

Harrisburg decides a lot, or doesn't

Bills that passed the House but not the Senate

- **Minimum Wage Increase (HB1549)**
- **Working Pennsylvanians Tax Credit (HB820)**
- **ACA Protections (HB404, HB535, HB618, HB755)**
- **Legal Cannabis (HB1200)**
- **Cyber Charter Reform (HB1500)**
- **Lowering Teacher Certification Fees (HB1402)**
- **Child Care Recruitment and Retention Program (HB506)**
- **Capping Overdraft Fees (HB1553)**
- **...and many, many more!**

We Gotta Compete!



We Gotta Compete!

In every seat

Why?

- **Holding power to account is important now more than ever**
- **Keep 'em all busy - Make them spend more time and money**
- **Reverse coat tails for Governor Shapiro**
- **Build local bench - Strategic losses in 2026 for future wins**
- **Collect better data**

Since 2000, we have never contested every seat
2018 cycle: 181 in House, 24 in Senate

We Gotta Compete!

Where we still need candidates

Senate

- **SD-20 Baker:** Luzerne (part), Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne (part), Wyoming
- **SD-32 Stefano:** Bedford, Fayette, Somerset
- **SD-34 Rothman:** Cumberland (most), Dauphin (part), Perry

House

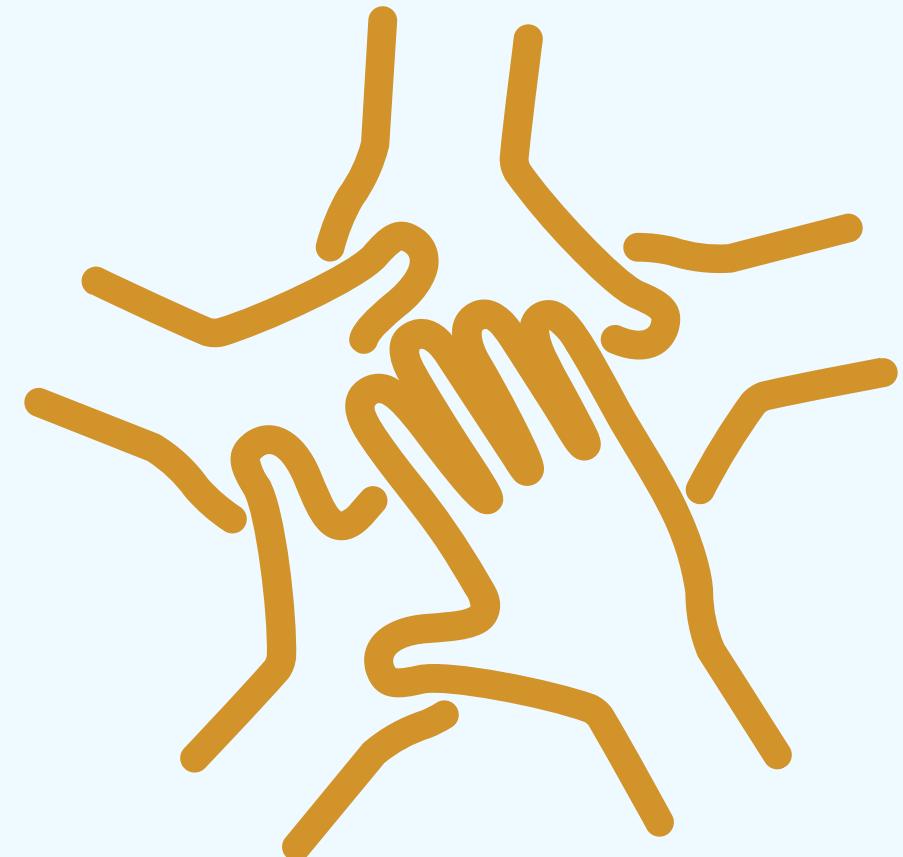
- **19 Districts with no leads. 14 with waffling leads.**
- Adams, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Bucks, Butler, Cameron, Clearfield, Cumberland, Dauphin, Elk, Fayette, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Lancaster, Lebanon, Luzerne, Lycoming, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Schuylkill, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland, York

We Gotta Compete!

The Team, The Team, The Team

This is an all-hands-on-deck operation

- **Senate Democratic Campaign Committee (SDCC), House Democratic Campaign Committee (HDCC)**
- **Lead PA and the Recruitment Table**
- **Local parties, leaders, and organizations**
- **And now you!**



Petitions & Timelines



Petitions & Timelines

Important process notes

- **Petition window: February 17–March 10, 2026**
- **Senate needs 500 valid signatures**
- **House needs 300 valid signatures**
- **Candidate packet includes petitions and statement of financial interest**
- **Must be filed in-person in Harrisburg by March 10, 5pm**

Recruitment



Rough Typology

	Self-IDed Upstart	Cautiously Curious	Not on the Radar
Vibe	"I want this"	"I thought about this"	"This is new to me"
Committed to idea	✓	?	?
Values-aligned	?	?	?
Ready to campaign	✓	?	?
Goals	Vet and set expectations	Fill in the gaps	Full scope recruitment

Recruitment Conversations



Be prepared to keep the conversation open.

**Most potential leaders will laugh at first.
They will also be flattered.**

Do not mistake initial disbelief or gratitude as a commitment one way or another.

When working through objection, listen and be respectful.

**Be clear in what your role is and how you can support.
Be honest about expectations:
their expectations, others' expectations.**



Recruitment Conversations



If there's interest and the discussion wanders into what it would be like to run, **watch for red flags:**

- ***"I can't knock on doors M-Th or Sun due to softball***
- ***"I simply can't ask anyone for money."***
- ***"You'll have to do most of the work because my job/family/hobby take a lot of time."***

Recruitment Conversations

Next Steps & Follow-up:

If they definitely want to run, refer them to:

Senate: william@pasdcc.org

House: sawyer@pahdcc.com

And CC Oliver at oliver@leadpa.org

If they have more questions/need more convincing, refer them to: oliver@leadpa.org

If they want to run in 2027 or beyond, send info to oliver@leadpa.org

If they do not refuse outright, let it sit for a brief time.
It's never a "no," it's a "not now." 😊

Recruitment Conversations

Will there be training and support?

There will be training hosted by the caucuses and Lead PA. Exact timing and content TBD. We can also refer to additional training resources.

Support types and amounts vary by candidate and district. To manage expectations with all candidates, there is no guarantee of support or staff at this time.



Build Your List

... is **active** in the area? ... is **always** in the **local paper**? ... gets invited to speak at award ceremonies? ... owns a **really popular local business**? ... is **persistent** in demanding change in **local government**? ... leads a **homeowner's association**? ... leads or actively supports their **child's PTO**? ... is a well respected **coach or mentor**? ... is a well respected member of your **local media**?



... teaches at a community college or university? ... works in human services or social services? ... is a frontline worker? ... has organized aid during COVID? ... has organized a crowd-funding initiative for someone in need?... is a veteran? ... is a retired teacher? ... is a retired doctor? ... seems to always know everyone? ... leads or actively supports a professional association?



Next Steps



Next Steps



- **Make a list of prospects. If you have access to voterfile, verify their party and district.**
- **Contact them and plant the seed.**
- **If they are definitely going to run, send them to the caucuses.**
 - **Senate: wiliam@pasdcc.org**
 - **House: sawyer@pahdcc.com**
- **If they need more convincing, send them to oliver@leadpa.org**

Thank you!

oliver@leadpa.org

