

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Senate Republicans: No Lame Duck Session in 2010

HARRISBURG – Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati (R-25) and Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi (R-9) announced today that the Senate will not convene for a regular lame duck session in 2010.

“In the spirit of openness and transparency, the Senate will not convene for a lame duck session after the November 2 elections,” said Senator Scarnati. “We are announcing this now to provide plenty of time for everyone – the Governor, the House and the Senate – to plan ahead so that this year’s legislative work is completed before the election.”

“For the past three years, one of our priorities has been to make the Senate’s work more transparent to the public,” said Senator Pileggi. “The Senate did not have a lame duck session in 2008, and it worked very well. This decision is in line with our efforts to rewrite Pennsylvania’s Right-to-Know Law, to strengthen the Sunshine Law, and to improve the operation of state government.”

The 28 days between November 2 and November 30 are known as a “lame duck” session because some members of the General Assembly can vote on legislation despite the fact that their successors have already been elected. About a dozen members of the House, and one member of the Senate, have already announced plans to retire this year.

The state constitution prohibits a governor from seeking a third term. Because of that restriction, if a lame duck session were held this year, the governor would be in the position of signing or vetoing legislation after his successor was already elected.

In even-numbered years, a lame duck session can run from the day after the General Election until November 30, the date on which the terms of all House members and half of the Senate members expire under the state constitution.

Through the years, lame duck sessions have been criticized because legislators and the Governor are less accountable to voters during this period of time. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Pennsylvania is currently one of only 11 states that do not limit the length of legislative sessions.

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Senator Kim Ward (R-39) has introduced [Senate Bill 106](#), a constitutional amendment which would eliminate regular lame duck sessions. It would allow the legislature to convene if a special session is necessary. A similar bill was approved by the Senate last session but did not advance in the House.

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