



Pennsylvania Department of General Services

October 24, 2025

Honorable Kim Ward
President Pro Tempore
292 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3039

Honorable Joanna McClinton
Speaker of the House
139 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2191

Honorable Joe Pittman
Senate Majority Leader
350 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3041

Honorable Matt Bradford
House Majority Leader
110 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2070

Honorable Jesse Topper
House Minority Leader
423 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2078

Honorable Jay Costa
Senate Minority Leader
535 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3043

Honorable Scott Martin
Senate Appropriations Chairman
281 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 1720-3013

Honorable Jordan Harris
House Appropriations Chairman
512E Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2186

Honorable James Struzzi
House Appropriations Chairman
245 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2062

Honorable Vincent Hughes
Senate Appropriations Chairman
545 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3007

Dear Leaders of the Pennsylvania House and Senate:

As you know, a man pleaded guilty last week to attempted murder, aggravated arson, terrorism, and more following the unprecedented assassination attempt on the Governor's life and attack on the Governor's Residence earlier this year. This attack took place on the first night of Passover, while the Governor's immediate and extended family were inside the official Residence to celebrate the holiday.

401 North Street, Room 515 North Office Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120
Telephone: 717.787.5996

While unsuccessful, the incident showed that major security updates were needed to protect public visitors to the Governor's Residence, the current First Family, and all future governors from active threats at a time when elected officials across the country are facing rising political violence.

We know these concerns are top of mind for you and your members. The Department of General Services, through the Capitol Police Department, has engaged members of the General Assembly to discuss ways to keep Representatives, Senators, and their staff safe, as well.

As the two state agencies primarily responsible for the safety of the Governor, his family, and Commonwealth property, the Department of General Services (DGS) and the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) have been working diligently to restore the Governor's Residence to its original condition, make improvements to our physical security infrastructure, and enhance our overall security protocol since the attack.

To that end, our agencies write this letter to provide an update on the status of the restoration and subsequent safety improvement projects being undertaken to ensure that the events of April 13, 2025 never occur again.

Our first priority was to restore the Governor's Residence in order to allow the public to once again have access to the property and ensure the First Family could resume residency in the home. The destruction was significant – the illegal, forced entry, as well as the subsequent fire started with homemade Molotov cocktails, resulted in considerable damage to the structure, interior rooms, furniture, and fixtures throughout the Governor's Residence.

In the Spring Update to the Governor's Executive Budget proposal submitted by Secretary of the Budget Uri Monson on May 16, 2025, the estimated cost to bring the Residence back to its pre-event condition was \$6.44 million. Since the day after the attack, DGS has diligently worked with its excess insurance carrier FM Global to submit expenses and recover these costs. To date, we have submitted \$4.5 million in expenses incurred. FM Global has so far approved reimbursement of \$2 million, retained \$1 million for the deductible, and paid the Commonwealth back \$1 million. We continue to work closely with FM Global for approval on additional reimbursements for restoration-related costs already incurred and expect to fully recover for all smoke and fire damage to the property.

In addition to that restoration work, it was clear the Governor's Residence needed structural improvements to improve the building's security. PSP immediately contracted with Jeffrey B. Miller to conduct an independent security review of the Governor's Residence to pinpoint security failures, review protocols, identify gaps, and make concrete recommendations for improvements. In May, PSP received Miller's report and recommendations for security upgrades.

As a direct result of those recommendations, the Spring Update submitted by Secretary Monson also included requests for appropriations to cover safety upgrade improvements not covered by insurance. The appropriation amount requested for those improvements was \$16.9 million. Two funding streams were identified to expedite the restoration and security upgrades to ensure that the Governor's Residence emerges from this incident stronger, safer, and more resilient for future

Governors – General Fund appropriations requested in the Spring Update letter from Secretary Monson and Capital Projects Public Improvement Program (PIP) funds.

The arsonist, Cody Balmer, was able to jump the existing 6-foot fence around the property and gain access to the Residence grounds with little effort. Subsequently, it was recommended that DGS replace the existing fencing perimeter with a single material 10-foot barrier resistant to vehicle damage or climbing. Based on these recommendations, the entire outer perimeter barrier is being replaced at a total estimated cost of \$14 million.

After jumping the fence, Balmer was able to evade PSP stationed security personnel's line of sight and hide in foliage on the property grounds. Subsequently, it was recommended that DGS install updated cameras, improve lighting, and add motion detection sensors in the Residence yard. These lighting and camera improvements have a total estimated cost of \$6.3 million.

Once on Residence property, Balmer was able to gain access to the building by breaking the windows of the State Dining Room with a widely-available hammer. Subsequently, it was recommended that DGS completely retrofit the Residence's existing windows with bullet-proof and shatter-proof glass. These window improvements have a total estimated cost of \$8 million and will be paid for with PIP funds.

As you have all likely seen in video footage released by District Attorney Fran Chardo, Balmer threw Molotov cocktails throughout the State Dining Room to light the building on fire. The Residence, built in 1968 and not substantially updated since 1974, did not have a fire suppression system or sprinklers of any kind. In fact, the Residence was one of the largest Commonwealth-owned buildings in Harrisburg without such a system, according to the Fire Chief of the Harrisburg City Fire Department. Subsequently, DGS is installing a comprehensive fire suppression system in the Residence. This sprinkler system has a total estimated cost of \$4 million and will be paid for with PIP funds.

In addition to the visible and extensive building security enhancements outlined above, additional recommendations on things like staffing, internal systems, and other technology improvements have been implemented by DGS and PSP. To avoid risk of a successful security threat against the property or the Governor in the future, we cannot disclose all of those recommendations publicly.

The fire also caused significant damage to decorative items throughout the home, such as chandeliers, china, pianos, artwork, and more, which are outside of DGS or PSP's purview and in most cases did not qualify for any kind of insurance reimbursement. Those items were accumulated by Governors and First Families over many years, were originally paid for with private dollars, and their replacement has been supported by private dollars.

Throughout this process, DGS and PSP's goal has been to ensure the Residence remains a safe and secure building that can continue to host members of the public without disrupting or altering the character of the local neighborhood. As with any construction project, DGS is closely managing the work at the Residence to ensure insurance reimbursement, maintain deadlines and

estimates, and address a variety of potential risks. It is our shared priority that these efforts will leave the Residence better protected and well-positioned to serve the Commonwealth for generations to come.

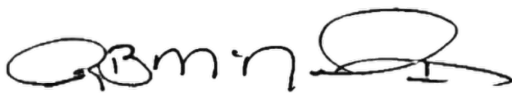
The utilization of these funding options has been essential to expediting the restoration and security enhancements at the Residence, which is now successfully reopened to the public. This would not have been possible without the committed and diligent work of DGS, PSP, and the contractors we have relied upon throughout this project.

Unfortunately, the threat to a high-profile elected official like Governor Shapiro does not end when he leaves the Governor's Residence. To that end, PSP in consultation with independent experts, conducted a security review of the Governor's personal residence, which he and his family continue to utilize. PSP decided on several recommendations for security improvements at the Governor's private residence, including erecting physical and visual barriers on the property, installing enhanced security technology, and other steps. These security improvements, which cannot all be disclosed to the public for safety reasons, are estimated to total around \$1 million. As these costs are related to the work of the Executive Services Office of PSP, PSP General Government Operations funding will be utilized to implement the recommendations.

The horrifying attack on the Governor, his family, and Commonwealth property, coupled with the unfortunate rise in political violence across our country, has made these updates necessary to protect the Governor and his family and ensure the continued operation of the executive branch of the Commonwealth. No family should have to live behind bulletproof glass or behind large walls – but the nature of the threats against elected officials today require us to take these important steps.

The Governor and the Residence, like the State Capitol and members of the General Assembly, represent the people of Pennsylvania – and an attack on them is an attack on all Pennsylvanians. We appreciate the ongoing partnership with the General Assembly to protect our elected officials, including the critically important work to restore and secure the Governor's Residence in Harrisburg.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reginald B. McNeil, II'.

Reginald B. McNeil, II, Secretary
Department of General Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Col. Christopher L. Paris'.

Colonel Christopher L. Paris, Commissioner
Pennsylvania State Police