

## Shapiro says transit now ‘off the table,’ time to finish budget

By Eric Scicchitano CNHI Harrisburg Bureau  
Sep 9, 2025

1 of 2



Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro speaks at the headquarters of the Department of Labor & Industry.

FILE | Commonwealth Media Services



PHILADELPHIA — Gov. Josh Shapiro said Monday that with the public mass transit issue “off the table” after he approved a temporary funding solution for Philadelphia’s system, Pennsylvania’s Senate must act swiftly to resolve the commonwealth’s months-old budget stalemate.

“The issue that they had been highlighting as a reason not to get it done is now off the table. It is time to close this out,” Shapiro said Monday, referring to the Senate Republican majority.

Pennsylvania's budget was due June 30. Transit funding proved a major sticking point but not the only issue in dispute as Republicans and Democrats negotiate spending on education and spending overall.

Shapiro initially offered a \$51.5 billion budget proposal. Post-deadline proposals saw the House Democratic majority push through a \$50.6 billion plan while Senate Republicans passed a flat-funded \$47.6 billion bill on the premise that priority expenses could be paid while negotiations could continue on disputed issues.

None balance expenses and revenues without touching the commonwealth's reserves.

And, none worked to break the stalemate, but the governor suggested the transit deal might do the trick.

"Staff is quite literally meeting at this time, at this moment, and I expect that leaders and I will continue to have conversations throughout the day. It's time to close this out, it's time to pass a budget," Shapiro said Monday morning following a ribbon-cutting with golf icon Tiger Woods at the latter's new TGR Learning Lab at Cobbs Creek Golf Course, an educational program for K-12 students with an emphasis on science, technology, engineering, arts and math.

Shapiro approved PennDOT to redirect up to \$394 million in capital and infrastructure funds to be appropriated in 2025-26 to instead be used by Philadelphia's Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority to buoy daily operations for two years. The governor's office said the details are quite different from what was offered by Republicans in the Senate, but top line, it's similar to what the upper chamber's majority offered last month.

"Since taking office, Gov. Josh Shapiro and his administration have focused on storytelling instead of leading. This may explain why Gov. Shapiro was unaware of the Public Transit Trust Fund until Senate Republicans informed him of the fund's existence. The Public Transit Trust fund is one of the many tools available under Gov. Shapiro's authority to use without the need for legislative approval. It is a dedicated funding stream for mass transit operations and capital projects that is replenished annually with \$400 million. Instead of blaming Senate Republicans, Gov. Shapiro should be thanking us for providing a solution that was not only right in front of him from the beginning but also doesn't raise taxes on Pennsylvanians," Senate President Pro Tempore Kim Ward, R-Westmoreland, said.

On Shapiro's expectations for a final budget, he said he doesn't anticipate a permanent funding solution for mass transit across the commonwealth. He said it would "include all the other important initiatives" on funding schools, veteran supports and law enforcement, for example. As negotiations are active, he didn't provide details.

"I can tell you that the issues I have been narrowing between the two sides are really narrow. We're down to discussing, really, what I would consider minutiae in the context of, give or take, roughly \$50 billion. It is time now for these leaders to make these final tough choices, to close it out, to bring their members back to Harrisburg and to vote on the budget," Shapiro said.

The Pennsylvania Freedom Caucus, a conservative group of state representatives and senators, issued a joint statement Monday about budget negotiations. They called for a budget that includes their own priorities — exiting the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a cap-and-trade program for energy emissions, as well as strengthening school choice and balancing spending and revenues. If that's not accomplished, they said any offer should be rejected.

Negotiations in the General Assembly are narrowed to House Democratic Majority Leader Matt Bradford, Republican Senate Majority Joe Pittman and Shapiro. The statement from the Freedom Caucus sent a message to fellow Republicans in the upper chamber.

"State senators should carefully consider their position as the hard-working taxpayers of our commonwealth will hold lawmakers accountable for unacceptable votes. Governor Shapiro, Leader Pittman and Leader Bradford: The people of Pennsylvania deserve bold leadership, not a back-room agreement that jeopardizes their future," the statement reads.

---

## Trending Video