

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
Formal Meeting Transcript

Date: April 9, 2026

[The meeting was called to order by Chairman Briggs.]

Chairman Briggs: Good afternoon.

Chairman Briggs: The House Judiciary Committee will come to order.

Chairman Briggs: Will the Secretary please call the roll.

[Roll Call]

Chairman Briggs: A quorum being present, the Committee will proceed with today's agenda.

[gavel]

Chairman Briggs: We will proceed with today's agenda.

I was told I did not gavel And by Council says Broadcast needs me to gavel to turn everything on. So, hopefully, they caught the beginning of the meeting, Um, for the information the members.

Chairman Briggs: Uh, the committee will be going over three bills that are on the post-agenda House Bill 1550, House Bill 2279, and House Bill 443, specifically on House Bill 443.

Chairman Briggs: For those of you not aware, on March 26, 2026, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court decided and Commonwealth V. Lee In a unanimous Court held that a mandatory life sentence for second degree murder without the possibility of parole is unconstitutional.

Under article 1, Section 13 At the Constitution, which prohibits cruel punishments, The court made it clear that individuals convicted of second-degree murder must receive meaningful consideration of release based upon the culpability and circumstances of thier crime. The court stayed their decision for 120 days to provide the general assembly with time to remedy these unconstitutional sentences, I think.

Chairman Briggs: I think House Bill 443 is a very good start to this process, and it was prepared to advance it through committee today. But after we posted the bill for a committee vote.

We have heard from many members on both sides and outside stakeholders who want to be more involved in this process. We were waiting for some groups to let us know exactly how they would like us to address the Lee decision. For example, we have identified 1,114 individuals that will be affected by this decision And 509 of them are from Philadelphia County alone.

Chairman Briggs: We think it's important to work with these groups, including the Philadelphia District Attorney's office, who will be involved in this process.

We have asked for him and others to provide language, and we are waiting their drafts to consider. I think that we can have a collaborative process to get to a better bill that balances the need to comply with the Lee decision, but also is fair and compassionate, respects, victims rights, and above all maintains community safety.

Chairman Briggs: These people. It's emotional.

These people have been serving long, unconstitutional sentences, and I will not put them in a worse position than what I believe the Supreme Court would order for them after the hundred and day run.

Chairman Briggs: I am confident that as long as we all work together, we will come up with a bill that we can all be proud of. Thank you for that moment.