

### The Pennsylvania Policy Database.

Pennsylvania will be the first state to build a data base that will allow state policy makers, citizens, teachers, and students to research state policy issues using a sophisticated, web-based search tools. The project, which is funded by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, is projected to be completed and accessible online by the end of 2007. It is modeled on the national policy agendas database constructed by Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones and available for public policy analysts at [www.policyagendas.org](http://www.policyagendas.org).

Baumgartner, distinguished professor of political science at The Pennsylvania State University, and Jones, professor of political science at the University of Washington, are authors or editors of several influential public policy books, including, jointly, *The Politics of Attention* (2005), *Policy Dynamics* (2002), and *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (1993). Their national database, which is funded by the National Science Foundation, allows analysts to trace and analyze the history of virtually the entire range of national policy issues from World War II to the present. Their project has coded into 19 major topics and 225 subtopics Congressional hearings, Congressional Quarterly reports, statutes, federal budgets, presidential executive orders, New York Times stories, and Gallup public opinion surveys. The database assists researchers in identifying source material across topics and provides tools for constructing descriptive and analytical tables and graphs.

The Pennsylvania database would incorporate similar state government records from 1975 to the present. It will mirror, as closely as possible, the national codebook to allow users to compare national and state-level activity. The state database will be freely accessible through the internet to all interested users, including elected officials and their staffs, public policy analysts, and journalists, as well as researchers in universities, foundations, civic organizations, and think tanks. The data also would be available for classroom use by professors and students. Users interested in government regulation of nuclear power, for example, could easily trace the history of this issue in Washington and Harrisburg.

The project is led by Professor Joseph P. McLaughlin, Jr., of Temple University but includes faculty members and students at other universities, including Professor Baumgartner, who is serving as senior advisor to the project as well as the faculty leader for The Pennsylvania State University Main Campus; Donald F. Kettl, director of the Fels Institute of Government at the University of Pennsylvania; David Y. Miller, assistant dean of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh; Richard A. Stafford, distinguished service professor of public policy at the Heinz School of Management and Government at Carnegie Mellon University; and Beverly A. Cigler, professor of political science at The Pennsylvania State University's Harrisburg campus. Temple's project staff is led by Wesley Leckrone, project coordinator, and Jason Bossie, graduate research manager.