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Wolf Administration confirms \$600 million budget gap

Lagging revenues and supplemental budget requests generate calls to rethink role of government (and what might be replaced by the non-profit sector)

December 15th – The 2016 election cycle is just barely over (the shock waves still unsettling many voters and politicians) and already there is a focus on the 2018 election cycle. It is in 2018 that the voters of the Commonwealth will once again decide who should serve as Governor of Pennsylvania.

Tom Wolf is the 47th and current Governor and clearly he still has more on his agenda to get done now and by pursuing another 4 year term (2019-2023).

On February 7th, Wolf will unveil his proposed 2017-2018 budget. It is this budget blueprint (and what eventually gets enacted) that will be freshest in the memories of voters as they head to the polls in spring and fall 2018 to pick from the candidates running for Governor.

Wednesday, the Wolf Administration (via Budget Secretary Randy Albright) confirmed a November report from Pennsylvania's Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) that Pennsylvania faces a current year (2016-2017) budget shortfall upwards of \$600 million. That figure, for the moment, appears to be \$641 million.

In other words, revenues haven't kept pace with expenditures and a hole has been created for the current fiscal year making it an even heavier lift for the Wolf Administration to craft a 2017-2018 spending plan that will resonate with voters.

Breathing down Wolf's neck is Senator Scott Wagner a Republican also from York County. Wagner, who likens himself to President-elect Donald Trump, has been a powerhouse (and political lightning rod) that gets credit for growing the Republican majority in the Pennsylvania Senate to a veto proof margin (34 of the 50 members). Wagner made a promise (and put his own money behind it) to realize a "super majority"

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