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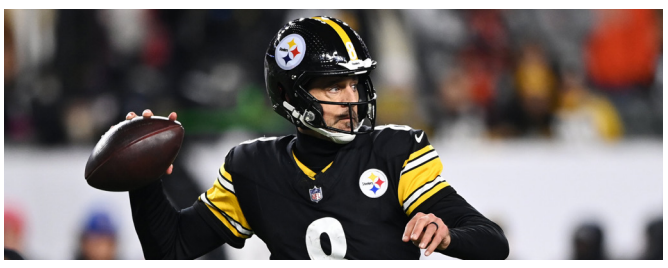

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TALKING TURKEY

Thanksgiving meal offers customers slight price relief



A Gerrity's employee adjusts the turkey inventory at the Keyser Oak Shopping Center store in Scranton on Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2026. **CHAD SEBRING/STAFF PHOTO**

By Robert Tomkavage
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Consumers grappling with continued inflation at the grocery store should see a little reprieve when heading out to buy a gobbler and all the fixings leading up to Thanksgiving.

Reports from a family-owned grocery store chain and multinational financial services firm both reflect minimal savings in the projected cost of the annual feast compared to the year before.

The cost for 15 Thanksgiving dinner staples, as of Nov. 6, totaled $38.50 this year — a roughly 18.7% decrease from the $47.34 cost in 2025, said Joe Fasula, co-owner of Gerrity's, which operates 10 supermarkets throughout Lackawanna, Luzerne and Northampton counties. The total also represents a 29.3% decrease from 2022 and a 19.5% decrease from 2023.

Gerrity's customers who spend $400 with their Fresh Grocer Rewards card from Oct. 23 through Nov. 25 may purchase a 20-pound Butterball turkey for $8, half the price of last year.

"It's always our goal to keep the customer's budget in mind," Fasula said. "We want to make sure we're giving them a fair price and helping them save money. When you look at the items on that list, you'll see we've kept the prices pretty consistent over the years and even lowered some of them. Assuming the customer qualifies for a free turkey, they're going to pay less than they would have last year."

TRACKING THE COSTS

The financial technology company Self began conducting a nationwide Thanksgiving dinner cost analysis in 2021. The study was updated in 2023 and 2025, and has been updated again in 2026. Some key findings:

- The average cost of a Thanksgiving meal for 10 people increased by 782.3% between 1960 and 2026, from $15.63 to $137.93.
- The average cost of a Thanksgiving meal for 10 people decreased by 17.3% between 2025 and 2026, from $166.69 to $137.93.
- The price of a turkey to serve 10 people has decreased the most of any product, by 48.1%, from 2025 to 2026 ($57 in 2025 vs. $29.60 in 2026).
- Mashed potato costs fell by 48%, from $13.27 in 2025 to $6.90 in 2026, the second-largest decrease. Cranberry sauce saw the third-largest decrease, falling $3.19 (60.2%), from $5.30 to $2.11.
- Six dishes are more expensive in 2026 than in 2025: sweet potato casserole ($2.66), green bean casserole (77 cents), bread rolls ($1.60), salad (13 cents), stuffing ($2.89) and pecan pie ($1.28).

While Fasula noted frozen turkeys are more expensive this year, he added some Gerrity's shoppers won't feel the sticker shock.

"It's a bad year for turkeys," he said. "I guess the avian flu was still going strong when they started to pack them back in the beginning of the year, when the turkeys are actually frozen for Thanksgiving. But for the customers who shop at our store and spend the $400, we've completely insulated them from that cost increase."

The price for a pound of green beans ($3.49) increased by $1.50, and a 5-pound bag of red potatoes ($5.99) cost $1 more. The cost for a gallon of whole milk ($4.54) increased by 39 cents, and a pound of yellow onions ($1.49) cost 20 cents more.

"The items that are up are really the ones that are out of our control because they're very market based," Fasula said. "Milk, for example, we have to be at the state minimum, so that's up and we're locked in with that price."

Meanwhile, the cost for a pound of butter ($2.49) represented a big savings, a decrease of $1.50; a bunch of celery (99 cents) is $1 cheaper; and the cost of a 3-pound bag of sweet potatoes ($1.99) dropped by 51 cents. A 16-ounce can of pumpkin ($1.19) is 30 cents cheaper; a 16-ounce can of cranberry sauce ($1.29) costs 21 cents less; and a 6-ounce can of cream of mushroom soup (79 cents) dipped by 20 cents.

The price for two frozen pie crusts ($1.88) is down 11 cents, and a 14-ounce can of chicken broth (89 cents) dipped by 10 cents.

See **TURKEY** on Page A7

New law toughens reporting conditions for AI child sex materials

Mandated reporters will be required to report suspected existence of child sex images

By James Halpin
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A new law taking effect early next year will toughen protections for children by requiring teachers, doctors and others to report all instances of child sexual abuse materials, including those shared by other children or made with artificial intelligence.

The change requires those required by law to report child abuse — such as teachers, childcare workers and healthcare providers — to also report the crimes of unlawful dissemination of intimate images, recording or disseminating child sex images, and hazing.

Mandated reporters will be required to report when they suspect the existence of child sex images, regardless of whether they were created with AI or shared by other minors.

Gov. Josh Shapiro signed the bill into law Oct. 22 following unanimous votes in the state House and Senate. The law takes effect Jan. 20. State Sen. Lisa Baker, R-20, Lehman Twp., co-sponsored a Senate version of the proposal that the chamber approved last November.

See **LAW** on Page A10

Old fundraising rules strained Pa. nonprofits; two new laws offer relief

By Marley Parish
SPOTLIGHT PA

BELLEFONTE — Pennsylvania nonprofits are preparing to take advantage of new fundraising options under an update to decades-old state rules.

Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro signed two bipartisan bills last month that grant eligible nonprofits more fundraising freedom with small games of chance. One allows organizations to accept credit, debit and mobile payments for raffle tickets. The other permits licensed fire departments to conduct raffles online.

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