

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 527 Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY HORNAMAN, BRENNAN, CAPPELLI, CRUZ, DePASQUALE,
GEORGE, GOODMAN, GRUCELA, HENNESSEY, HESS, KOTIK, KULA,
MAHONEY, MANDERINO, MICOZZIE, MOYER, M. O'BRIEN, O'NEILL,
PALLONE, PARKER, RAPP, READSHAW, REICHLEY, RUBLEY, SAINATO,
SCAVELLO, SHIMKUS, SIPTROTH, K. SMITH, M. SMITH, VITALI,
J. WHITE, WOJNAROSKI AND YOUNGBLOOD, DECEMBER 6, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
DECEMBER 6, 2007

A RESOLUTION

1 Establishing an advisory committee to study wandering by persons
2 with Alzheimer's disease, autism and other conditions,
3 devices to assist such persons and programs for them.

4 WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease is a progressive and fatal brain
5 disease that causes memory loss, impairs cognitive function and
6 changes behavior; and

7 WHEREAS, Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of
8 dementia in the United States; and

9 WHEREAS, The Alzheimer's Association estimates that there are
10 approximately 280,000 residents of this Commonwealth who are at
11 least 65 years old and suffer from Alzheimer's disease; and

12 WHEREAS, The Alzheimer's Association estimates that at least
13 60% of people who have Alzheimer's disease wander and could
14 become lost; and

15 WHEREAS, Autism is a neurological disorder that impairs
16 social interaction, cognitive function and both verbal and

1 nonverbal communication; and

2 WHEREAS, The United States Centers for Disease Control
3 estimates that one of every 150 children has a form of autism;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, According to the 2000 United States Census,
6 2,922,221 children 17 years of age or younger resided in this
7 Commonwealth; and

8 WHEREAS, There are approximately 19,481 autistic children
9 residing in this Commonwealth; and

10 WHEREAS, Wandering is a characteristic of many autistic
11 children; and

12 WHEREAS, Persons with other conditions, such as other forms
13 of dementia or developmental disabilities, may also wander; and

14 WHEREAS, The search for a person who has wandered can be very
15 expensive, and it can take many hours, involve many police
16 officers, firefighters, family members, friends or other
17 volunteers; and

18 WHEREAS, The longer it takes to find a person who has
19 wandered, the higher the risk of that person being found injured
20 or deceased; and

21 WHEREAS, Advances in technology have resulted in the
22 availability of devices that can assist in the search for
23 persons who have wandered; and

24 WHEREAS, Former United States Vice President, Hubert H.
25 Humphrey, is credited with saying that "the moral test of
26 government is how that government treats those who are in the
27 dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of
28 life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the
29 sick, the needy and the handicapped"; therefore be it

30 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint

1 State Government Commission to establish an advisory committee
2 to undertake a study of wandering, devices that can aid in
3 monitoring or locating the whereabouts of potential wanderers
4 and programs that have been developed to deal with wanderers,
5 including searching for them; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the study include, but not be limited to, the
7 following issues:

8 (1) The number of residents who may be at risk of
9 wandering and demographic information about them, including
10 the types of homes or facilities in which they reside and the
11 persons who are their caretakers.

12 (2) Actual incidents of wandering, including how a
13 search was conducted and the outcome of the incident.

14 (3) Devices and systems that have been developed to
15 monitor the whereabouts of potential wanderers or to assist
16 in locating wanderers.

17 (4) Programs developed by other states or local
18 governments or by organizations to assist in locating
19 wanderers.

20 (5) The cost of any devices or programs and information
21 regarding who pays these costs.

22 (6) Recommendations for a program or programs that the
23 Commonwealth, local governments, or both, can develop to
24 assist in the monitoring or searching for persons who wander;
25 and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the advisory committee include, but not be
27 limited to, representatives from: Alzheimer's disease advocacy
28 groups, autism advocacy groups, police departments, fire
29 departments, long-term care providers, family member caretakers
30 of persons with Alzheimer's disease or autism; and county

1 commissioners or other local government officials; and be it
2 further

3 RESOLVED, That the advisory committee report its findings and
4 recommendations to the General Assembly within 18 months of the
5 date this resolution is adopted.