

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 833 Session of 2010

INTRODUCED BY DePASQUALE, BELFANTI, BISHOP, BRIGGS, BUXTON, CALTAGIRONE, COHEN, D. COSTA, GEIST, HARKINS, HOUGHTON, JOHNSON, KORTZ, MANDERINO, MUNDY, MURPHY, READSHAW, REED, SEIP, SHAPIRO, K. SMITH, STABACK, STURLA, WAGNER, WHEATLEY AND YOUNGBLOOD, JUNE 2, 2010

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, JUNE 2, 2010

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct an
2 in-depth analysis of the occurrence, effects and trends of
3 poverty and low income in this Commonwealth.

4 WHEREAS, Based on the United States Census Bureau data for
5 2008 nearly 1.46 million Pennsylvanians, including more than
6 444,600 children, lived in poverty; and

7 WHEREAS, In 2008 the Federal Government defined poverty as an
8 annual income of \$21,200 or less for a couple with two children;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's overall poverty rate has risen from
11 10.5% in 2000 to 12.1% in 2008, and between 2007 and 2008
12 Pennsylvania was one of only eight states that had a
13 statistically significant increase in poverty, from 11.6% to
14 12.1%; and

15 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth's increase in poverty was recorded
16 even before significant job losses occurred in 2009; and

17 WHEREAS, The rate of poverty among children increased from

1 14.9% in 2000 to 16.4% in 2008 in this Commonwealth, and the
2 rate of family poverty from 7.8% in 2000 to 8.5% in 2008; and

3 WHEREAS, Families and individuals living in poverty struggle
4 to have the resources or opportunities to meet their basic
5 needs, including adequate housing, child care, nutrition and
6 health care, thus diminishing their prospects for financial
7 security and independence, and potentially deepening their
8 dependence on State assistance; and

9 WHEREAS, The stress and side effects of poverty can undermine
10 the safety and stability of children, families and individuals;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Pennsylvanians living in poverty often face many
13 barriers impacting access and opportunity to education, training
14 and career ladders essential to employment and wages to afford
15 food, housing, health care and quality child care; and

16 WHEREAS, The recession has deepened economic insecurity in
17 all regions of this Commonwealth, as many families have been
18 impacted by unemployment, bankruptcy, home foreclosures, hunger,
19 inadequate access to health care and homelessness; and

20 WHEREAS, Poverty affects the development of a trained and
21 skilled work force, the State's competitiveness and business
22 climate, as well as State and local government budgets; and

23 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth has a compelling interest to reduce
24 poverty and to enlist the public and private sectors in an
25 examination and identification of strategies to help alleviate
26 it and the resulting side effects for individuals, families and
27 the Commonwealth; therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
29 State Government Commission to conduct an in-depth study of the
30 occurrence, effects, trends and future projections of poverty in

1 this Commonwealth; and be it further

2 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission be
3 authorized to create a task force in this undertaking; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission and task
6 force propose a timeline for additional status reports to the
7 House of Representatives on the state of poverty and progress on
8 recommendations; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission identify
10 no fewer than 25 members of the task force with bipartisan,
11 broad-based and geographically diverse representation from the
12 legislative and executive branches as well as business, faith,
13 community, labor, local government, human services advocates and
14 individuals affected by poverty to examine data, interview
15 individuals and families, hold no less than six public listening
16 events in different geographic locations throughout this
17 Commonwealth, survey communities and examine successful
18 strategies used in other states' poverty reduction efforts; and
19 be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue a
21 report based on the recommendations of the task force to the
22 House of Representatives no later than 18 months from the date
23 that this resolution is adopted.