

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 52 Session of 2009

INTRODUCED BY GREENLEAF, WASHINGTON, PILEGGI, MUSTO, KITCHEN,  
O'PAKE, McILHINNEY, LEACH, M. WHITE, TARTAGLIONE, WILLIAMS,  
MELLOW, SMUCKER, STACK, FONTANA AND BROWNE, MARCH 19, 2009

REFERRED TO JUDICIARY, MARCH 19, 2009

## A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to establish an  
2 advisory committee to study the effects of parental  
3 incarceration on the children of incarcerated parents, to  
4 recommend a system for determining and assessing the needs of  
5 the children of incarcerated parents, the services available  
6 to them and the barriers to accessing those services and to  
7 make a report with recommendations to the Senate.

8 WHEREAS, In the United States, more than 2 million children  
9 have a parent who is currently incarcerated; and

10 WHEREAS, Nearly 10 million children in the United States have  
11 or have had a parent who was under correctional supervision at  
12 some point in the child's life; and

13 WHEREAS, Approximately 65% of the women in State prison are  
14 mothers of children under 18 years of age, and nearly two-thirds  
15 of these mothers lived with their children before they were  
16 arrested and incarcerated; and

17 WHEREAS, Approximately 55% of the men in State prison are  
18 fathers of children under 18 years of age, and nearly half of  
19 these fathers lived with their children before they were  
20 arrested and incarcerated; and

1 WHEREAS, Parental imprisonment and involvement in the  
2 criminal justice system can impose serious financial hardships  
3 on a family and can lead to disrupted living arrangements for  
4 children, factors which are linked to an increased risk of  
5 delinquency; and

6 WHEREAS, Children of incarcerated parents suffer emotional  
7 and psychological effects when separated from their parents,  
8 beginning with the trauma of arrest and continuing through  
9 incarceration; and

10 WHEREAS, Incarcerated parents often lose contact with their  
11 children and once they lose contact, it is very difficult to  
12 reestablish that relationship when the parent is released; and

13 WHEREAS, More than half of all incarcerated parents in the  
14 United States report never receiving a personal visit from their  
15 children; and

16 WHEREAS, Several barriers exist that affect the overall  
17 experience of parent-child visits in prison, including  
18 inadequate or inconvenient visiting hours, difficulty in  
19 scheduling visits, geographical location of prison facilities  
20 and visiting procedures or facilities that are uncomfortable or  
21 lack child-friendly visiting areas; and

22 WHEREAS, Finding ways for a child to connect with the child's  
23 incarcerated parent helps the child understand why the parent is  
24 absent, eases family reunification when the parent returns home  
25 and helps reduce the parent's chance of recidivism; therefore be  
26 it

27 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Joint State Government  
28 Commission to establish an advisory committee to study the  
29 effects of parental incarceration on the children of  
30 incarcerated parents, to recommend a system for determining and

1 accessing the needs of the children of incarcerated parents, the  
2 services available to them and the barriers to accessing those  
3 services; and be it further

4       RESOLVED, That the advisory committee be comprised of  
5 approximately 30 members and include persons representing all  
6 relevant aspects of the criminal justice and social welfare  
7 systems, representatives of academia, the faith community, child  
8 advocates, private and public organizations involved in criminal  
9 justice and social welfare issues and other persons who have an  
10 interest and expertise in the issue of children of incarcerated  
11 parents; and be it further

12       RESOLVED, That the advisory committee report to the Senate  
13 with its findings and recommendations no later than two years  
14 from the date that this resolution is adopted.