

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 91

Session of
1975

INTRODUCED BY MESSRS. RICHARDSON, BARBER, HAMMOCK, ROSS, MRS.
TOLL, MRS. KELLY, MESSRS. JOHNSON, OLIVER, REED AND
BLACKWELL, APRIL 29, 1975

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON RULES, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
AS AMENDED, JULY 23, 1975

In the House of Representatives, April 29, 1975

1 WHEREAS, The Philadelphia State Hospital at Byberry has
2 become a center of controversy.

3 WHEREAS, This institution is charged with the care of the
4 mentally retarded AND THE MENTALLY ILL. <—

5 WHEREAS, It has been reported that illegal administration of
6 drugs on patients has taken place; the qualifications of the
7 staff doctors are dubious; incidents of racial discrimination
8 are occurring frequently and the lack of social programs on
9 weekends is resulting in a rampant rise in homosexuality.

10 WHEREAS, It is further reported that the criminally insane
11 are placed in this institution together with the mental
12 patients.

13 WHEREAS, This Legislature should also be concerned with this
14 matter. Such concern should not revolve about any of the
15 personalities in this controversy, but rather should be directed
16 to the basic issue of the quality of care being provided the

1 mentally retarded patients at Byberry and the need for remedial
2 legislation or other positive action by this Legislature to
3 assure such quality of care; therefore be it

4 RESOLVED, That the Speaker of the House of Representatives
5 appoint a committee of nine members of the House of
6 Representatives, five of whom shall be members of the majority
7 party and four of whom shall be members of the minority party,
8 to investigate the controversy at the Philadelphia State
9 Hospital at Byberry relative to the quality of care given to the
10 mentally retarded AND MENTALLY ILL patients of this institution <—
11 to determine what legislative action is needed to assure quality
12 care of such patients; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the committee may hold public hearings, take
14 testimony, and make its study at such places as it deems
15 necessary within this Commonwealth. It may issue subpoenas under
16 the hand and seal of its chairman commanding any person to
17 appear before it and answer questions touching matters properly
18 being inquired into by the committee and to produce such books,
19 papers, records and documents as the committee deems necessary.
20 Such subpoenas may be served upon any person and shall have the
21 force and effect of subpoenas issued out of the courts of this
22 Commonwealth. Any person who wilfully neglects or refuses to
23 testify before the committee or to produce any books, papers,
24 records or documents, shall be subject to the penalties provided
25 by the laws of the Commonwealth in such case. Each member of the
26 committee shall have power to administer oaths and affirmations
27 to witnesses appearing before the committee; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That within thirty calendar days after the
29 committee has made its report, the chairman of the committee
30 shall cause a record of all expenses incurred by the committee,

1 or the members thereof, which are payable at Commonwealth
2 expense, to be filed with the Speaker of the House and the
3 Speaker shall cause the same to be entered in the journal
4 thereof. No expenses incurred by the committee or any member
5 thereof shall be reimbursable by the Chief Clerk unless such
6 expense shall first have been included as an expense item in the
7 record heretofore required; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That the committee shall report its findings and
9 any ~~suggestive~~ SUGGESTED legislation to the General Assembly as <—
10 soon as possible.