

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 204 Session of
1995

INTRODUCED BY PETRONE AND WOGAN, SEPTEMBER 19, 1995

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON RULES, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
AS AMENDED, OCTOBER 17, 1995

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Urban Affairs Committee to inquire into the
2 practices of municipal authorities.

3 WHEREAS, The Municipal Authorities Act of 1945 permits any
4 county, city, borough, incorporated town, township or school
5 district of the Commonwealth, acting singly or jointly with one
6 or more other local governments, to organize an authority; and

7 WHEREAS, Today there exists over 2,000 active municipal
8 authorities in Pennsylvania; and

9 WHEREAS, Municipal authorities in Pennsylvania were devised
10 as a vehicle for accomplishing public purposes not possible or
11 practical through direct action of counties, municipalities and
12 school districts, as well as to insulate public services from
13 political abuses; and

14 ~~WHEREAS, The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) recently~~ <—
15 ~~began investigation into concerns that the bid specifications~~
16 ~~for a \$1.5 million sewer lining contract awarded by the board of~~
17 ~~the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority may have been changed~~

1 ~~to give one contractor an unfair advantage; and~~

2 ~~WHEREAS, The FBI is also trying to determine whether any~~
3 ~~public officials of the Authority received kickbacks from such~~
4 ~~contractor; and~~

5 WHEREAS, In recent years there have been perceived problems
6 with actual or alleged abuses by ~~other~~ municipal authorities in <—
7 this Commonwealth; and

8 WHEREAS, There have also been concerns raised as to the
9 accountability of a municipal authority, its board members and
10 its employees to the municipality that created the authority and
11 the general public which ultimately pays for the authority's
12 expenditures; therefore be it

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Urban
14 Affairs Committee to conduct an inquiry into the practices of
15 municipal authorities in Pennsylvania as well as to conduct a
16 thorough review of the Municipal Authorities Act and to propose
17 any changes to that act it deems appropriate; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the committee may hold hearings, take
19 testimony and make its investigations at such places as it deems
20 necessary in this Commonwealth. ~~It may issue subpoenas under the~~ <—
21 ~~hand and seal of its chairman commanding any person to appear~~
22 ~~before the committee and to answer questions touching matters~~
23 ~~properly being inquired into by the committee and to produce~~
24 ~~such books, papers, records and documents as the committee deems~~
25 ~~necessary. The subpoenas may be served upon any person and shall~~
26 ~~have the same effect as subpoenas issued out of the courts of~~
27 ~~this Commonwealth. Any person who willfully neglects or refuses~~
28 ~~to testify before the committee or to produce any books, papers,~~
29 ~~records or documents shall be subject to the penalties provided~~
30 ~~by the laws of this Commonwealth in such case. Each member of~~

1 the committee shall have power to administer oaths and
2 affirmations to witnesses appearing before the committee; and be
3 it further

4 RESOLVED, That the committee make a report of its findings
5 and recommendations to the full House of Representatives no
6 later than September 30, 1996.