

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 381 Session of
2006

INTRODUCED BY GREENLEAF, COSTA, LEMMOND, O'PAKE, BOSCOLA, FERLO,
BROWNE, C. WILLIAMS, PILEGGI, MUSTO AND DINNIMAN,
NOVEMBER 20, 2006

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, NOVEMBER 20, 2006

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to establish an
2 advisory committee to study the underlying causes of wrongful
3 convictions and to make findings and recommendations to
4 reduce the possibility that in the future innocent persons
5 will be wrongfully convicted.

6 WHEREAS, Nationally more than 180 individuals have been
7 exonerated through postconviction DNA testing, and some of those
8 individuals spent time on death row; and

9 WHEREAS, At least eight individuals have been exonerated in
10 Pennsylvania through postconviction DNA testing, three of whom
11 were in prison for murder and one of whom was on death row; and

12 WHEREAS, It is important for us to understand why these
13 individuals were wrongfully convicted and how wrongful
14 convictions may be avoided in the future; and

15 WHEREAS, Not only is it a great injustice to imprison an
16 innocent person, but by incarcerating an innocent person, it is
17 likely that a guilty person remains capable of committing
18 additional crimes; therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Joint State Government

1 Commission to establish an advisory committee to study the
2 underlying causes of wrongful convictions so that the advisory
3 committee may develop a consensus on recommendations intended to
4 reduce the possibility that in the future innocent persons will
5 be wrongfully convicted in this Commonwealth; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the advisory committee be comprised of
7 approximately 30 members and represent at least the following
8 constituencies: prosecution, defense, law enforcement,
9 corrections, judiciary and victim assistance; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the advisory committee may include
11 representatives of academia, the faith community, private and
12 public organizations involved in criminal justice issues and
13 other criminal justice experts; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the advisory committee review cases in which
15 an innocent person was wrongfully convicted and subsequently
16 exonerated, review any other relevant materials, identify the
17 most common causes of wrongful convictions, identify current
18 laws, rules and procedures implicated in each type of causation,
19 and identify through research, experts and discussion potential
20 solutions in the form of legislative, rule or procedural changes
21 or educational opportunities for elimination of each type of
22 causation; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the advisory committee consider potential
24 implementation plans, cost implications, including possible
25 savings, and the impact on the criminal justice system for each
26 potential solution; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the advisory committee report to the Senate
28 with its findings and recommendations no later than November 30,
29 2008.