A RESOLUTION

Establishing the Task Force on Child Protection.

WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

(1) Recent events require a review of laws and procedures relating to the reporting of child abuse and the protection of the health and safety of children.

(2) A review of these laws and procedures will help to ensure that the Commonwealth is able to adequately protect its children.

(3) It is the responsibility of the Commonwealth to protect its citizens, particularly children.

(4) Therefore, the General Assembly shall establish a task force to conduct a thorough and comprehensive review to:

(i) ascertain any inadequacies relating to the mandatory reporting of child abuse; and

(ii) restore public confidence in the ability of the Commonwealth to protect the victims of child abuse;

therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Child Protection be
RESOLVED, That the task force consist of the following members, appointed within 25 days after the adoption of this resolution by both chambers:

(1) Six members knowledgeable and experienced in issues relating to child abuse or providing services to victims of child abuse as follows:

(i) Three members appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate, in consultation with the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader of the Senate. A member under this subparagraph may be a member of the Senate.

(ii) Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, in consultation with the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. A member under this subparagraph may be a member of the House of Representatives.

(2) Four members appointed by the Governor as follows:

(i) One member shall be a member of the general public.

(ii) One member shall be a member of a victim organization or a children and youth services organization who is directly involved in providing services to victims of child abuse.

(iii) One member experienced in the operation and interaction between a county children and youth agency and the Commonwealth.

(iv) A district attorney.

(3) The Secretary of Public Welfare or a designee who shall be an employee of the department. The designee shall be appointed in writing, and a copy shall be submitted to the
chairman of the task force; and be it further
RESOLVED, That the Governor select the chairperson of the
task force; and be it further
RESOLVED, That the task force conduct its business as
follows:
(1) The physical presence of six members constitutes a
quorum of the task force.
(2) Action of the task force shall be authorized or
ratified by majority vote of its members.
(3) A member not physically present may participate by
teleconference or video conference.
(4) The following shall apply:
(i) The task force shall meet as necessary but no
fewer than five times prior to September 30, 2012.
Additional meetings may be called by the chairperson as
necessary.
(ii) The chairperson shall schedule a meeting upon
written request of eight members of the task force.
(iii) The first meeting shall be convened within 45
days.
(iv) The task force shall hold public hearings as
necessary to obtain the information required to conduct
its review.
(v) The Department of Public Welfare, the Joint
State Government Commission and the Juvenile Courts
Judges' Commission shall cooperate to provide
administrative or other assistance to the task force.
(vi) Members shall not receive compensation but
shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses
incurred in service of the task force;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the task force have the following powers:

(1) To examine and analyze the practices, processes and procedures relating to the response to child abuse.

(2) To review and analyze law, procedures, practices and rules relating to the reporting of child abuse.

(3) To hold public hearings for the taking of testimony and the requesting of documents.

(4) The chairperson shall have the power to administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses appearing before the task force;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the task force have the following duties:

(1) To accept and review written comments from individuals and organizations.

(2) To make, by November 30, 2012, a final report to the Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

(3) Based on its review, the report under paragraph (2) shall include recommendations:

   (i) To improve the reporting of child abuse.

   (ii) To implement any necessary changes in State statutes and practices, policies and procedures relating to child abuse.

   (iii) To train appropriate individuals in the reporting of child abuse.

(4) To make reports as follows:

   (i) The task force may file status reports and updates with the Governor and the Senate and the House of Representatives as it deems appropriate.
(ii) A report under this paragraph shall be adopted at a public meeting.

(iii) A report under this paragraph shall be a public record under the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law;

and be it further

RESOLVED, That the task force expire December 31, 2012.