

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

---

# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 169 Session of  
1999

---

INTRODUCED BY DRUCE, STAIRS, COLAFELLA AND ROBINSON, MAY 4, 1999

---

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, MAY 4, 1999

---

A RESOLUTION

1 Establishing the Commission on Postsecondary Education for the  
2 Twenty-First Century.

3 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth annually provides more than \$1.6  
4 billion to support higher education institutions in Pennsylvania  
5 and the student financial aid programs administered by the  
6 Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency; and

7 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives believes that adequate  
8 access to postsecondary education programs continues to be  
9 unavailable to many Pennsylvania residents because of barriers  
10 which include, but are not limited to, financial issues; and

11 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth and its residents place great value  
12 on the opportunity for all residents to pursue educational  
13 programs beyond the high school level; and

14 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives is concerned that the  
15 public funds appropriated to support higher education  
16 institutions and students in Pennsylvania promote:

17 (1) access to postsecondary education programs of their  
18 choice for all residents of this Commonwealth;

1           (2) effective and high-quality academic programs which  
2       serve the needs of students and this Commonwealth; and

3           (3) the efficient operation of public higher education  
4       institutions;

5       and

6       WHEREAS, The House of Representatives is concerned about the  
7       effectiveness of State government to utilize the public policy  
8       tools at its disposal, including the appropriations process and  
9       the Master Plan for Higher Education developed periodically by  
10      the State Board of Education, to address these issues; and

11      WHEREAS, The 1998 report of the Subcommittee on Higher  
12      Education of the Committee on Education of the House of  
13      Representatives, pursuant to House Resolution No. 379 of 1998,  
14      made several recommendations to address these issues, including  
15      the recommendation for the establishment of a "blue-ribbon  
16      commission"; and

17      WHEREAS, Such a blue-ribbon commission would build on and  
18      expand the work of the Subcommittee on Higher Education as well  
19      as facilitate a collaborative approach among public officials,  
20      representatives of higher education and other community leaders  
21      to develop additional recommendations on these issues for  
22      consideration by the General Assembly, the Governor, the State  
23      Board of Education and the higher education community; therefore  
24      be it

25      RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives establish a  
26      Commission on Postsecondary Education for the Twenty-First  
27      Century to:

28           (1) continue to study the issue of postsecondary  
29       education costs, especially the efficiency of the current  
30       system of funding higher education and the ability of that

1 system to ensure that postsecondary education is affordable  
2 to the residents of this Commonwealth;

3 (2) make recommendations to the Senate, the House of  
4 Representatives and the Governor regarding efficient use of  
5 State appropriations for postsecondary education and other  
6 necessary legislative changes; and

7 (3) provide recommendations to the State Board of  
8 Education and the Department of Education regarding the  
9 development of a State Master Plan for Higher Education and  
10 other necessary regulatory changes;

11 and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the commission, in its study of postsecondary  
13 education:

14 (1) explore and define priorities for postsecondary  
15 education with particular attention to the efficiency and  
16 effectiveness of the current system to meet the goals of the  
17 public interest to be served, including:

18 (i) the impact of emerging technology on the  
19 delivery of postsecondary education services and  
20 programs;

21 (ii) the identification of important cost drivers in  
22 postsecondary education and any State resources which  
23 control those cost drivers; and

24 (iii) the trend toward duplication of programs among  
25 the various postsecondary institutions and the  
26 established need for additional programs and advanced  
27 degrees;

28 (2) review and recommend the realignment of current  
29 State policy to support these priorities;

30 (3) study financial alternatives designed to serve the

1 priorities and make recommendations on those alternatives;

2 (4) study the needs of the Commonwealth and its agencies  
3 for data and data analysis and recommend how these needs can  
4 be met; and

5 (5) provide input to all parties related to the  
6 preparation, adoption and implementation of the State Master  
7 Plan for Higher Education;

8 and be if further

9 RESOLVED, That the commission consist of 11 members appointed  
10 as follows:

11 (1) a member of the House of Representatives, appointed  
12 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, who shall  
13 serve as chairman;

14 (2) a member of the House of Representatives, appointed  
15 by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, who  
16 shall serve as vice chairman;

17 (3) the chairman of the Committee on Education;

18 (4) the minority chairman of the Committee on Education;

19 (5) the Secretary of Education or a designee;

20 (6) a member of the Governor's policy staff or budget  
21 office, designated by the Governor;

22 (7) the chairman of the State Board of Education or a  
23 designee;

24 (8) the chairman of the Pennsylvania Higher Education  
25 Assistance Agency or a designee; and

26 (9) three members of the public not employed by or  
27 holding membership on the governing body of a postsecondary  
28 education institution, appointed by the Speaker of the House  
29 of Representatives;

30 and be it further

1       RESOLVED, That the commission may, with the approval of the  
2 Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, contract with  
3 outside agencies for research work and data base development  
4 related to the study, from the amounts appropriated to the House  
5 of Representatives; and be it further

6       RESOLVED, That the commission prepare and publish an interim  
7 report on its study by October 31, 1999; and be it further

8       RESOLVED, That the commission commence its work upon the call  
9 of the commission member appointed by the Speaker of the House  
10 of Representatives, but in no case later than May 31, 1999, and  
11 conclude its task no later than November 30, 2000; and be it  
12 further

13       RESOLVED, That the commission have the authority to adopt, by  
14 majority vote of its membership, rules of operation and rules  
15 relating to the conduct of its study.