

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1127 Session of  
2007

INTRODUCED BY PAYTON, GERGELY, MURT, BRENNAN, CARROLL, CONKLIN,  
CRUZ, DALEY, DONATUCCI, ELLIS, FRANKEL, GALLOWAY, GEORGE,  
GIBBONS, GRUCELA, HARKINS, JAMES, JOSEPHS, W. KELLER,  
KESSLER, KING, KIRKLAND, KOTIK, KULA, LENTZ, McCALL,  
McGEEHAN, MOYER, M. O'BRIEN, PARKER, SABATINA, SCAVELLO,  
SIPTROTH, M. SMITH, STURLA, R. TAYLOR, VEREB, WAGNER, WATERS,  
WHEATLEY, WILLIAMS, YOUNGBLOOD, YUDICHAK, J. WHITE, GOODMAN,  
FREEMAN AND LEACH, APRIL 23, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, APRIL 23, 2007

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Pennsylvania Youth Commission; and providing  
2 for powers and duties, for report to the General Assembly and  
3 for Pennsylvania Youth Commission Scholarship.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Pennsylvania  
8 Youth Commission Act.

9 Section 2. Declaration of policy

10 (a) Findings and declarations.--The General Assembly finds  
11 and declares as follows:

12 (1) Public office is a public trust between elected  
13 officials and the citizens they represent.

14 (2) Despite age or voting record, each individual  
15 residing in this Commonwealth is part of the public trust.

1           (3) Voting is the foremost means of direct participation  
2     in government for the citizenry. Youth under 18 years of age  
3     are not yet eligible to vote, and the youngest eligible  
4     voters between 18 and 24 years of age consistently produce  
5     the lowest number of voters.

6           (4) The ability and responsibility of the citizenry to  
7     participate in the political process is a foundation of our  
8     government and an issue of utmost significance. In order to  
9     maintain a lasting knowledgeable and participatory electorate  
10    and the full functionality of the political process and the  
11    public trust, additional focus should be placed on the youth  
12    of our Commonwealth.

13          (5) As each generation moves forward, a new generation  
14    of voters will become eligible to participate directly in the  
15    democratic process, necessitating the call for a body that  
16    will serve as the conduit to awareness, understanding and  
17    participation in our government, its decisions and its  
18    importance.

19          (6) The creation of a body that will focus directly on  
20    the issues and concerns facing forthcoming participants in  
21    the democratic process of this Commonwealth will result in  
22    numerous and positive outcomes.

23    (b) Legislative intent.--It is the intent of the General  
24    Assembly that this act provide for and enhance the awareness,  
25    understanding and participation of the youth of this  
26    Commonwealth in the democratic process through a means separate  
27    from the ability to vote. It is the further intent of the  
28    General Assembly to establish a commission that will empower  
29    youth who are not yet eligible to vote. Through this commission,  
30    it is the intent of the General Assembly to tap the invaluable

1 resource of young minds and ideas that have been consistently  
2 disassociated with public officials, government and the status  
3 quo of the political process, and in turn produce involved  
4 citizens, leaders and pillars of young adulthood.

5 Section 3. Definitions.

6 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
7 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
8 context clearly indicates otherwise:

9 "Commission." The Pennsylvania Youth Commission established  
10 under this act.

11 "Director." The director of the Pennsylvania Youth  
12 Commission.

13 "Representative." A youth representative selected under  
14 section 7.

15 Section 4. Pennsylvania Youth Commission.

16 (a) Purpose.--The Pennsylvania Youth Commission is hereby  
17 established to recognize and empower the voices of youth and  
18 youth leaders throughout this Commonwealth. Through the  
19 commission, the ideas and concerns of this Commonwealth's youth  
20 shall be delivered to the General Assembly in a constructive and  
21 organized method. Youth members shall collect, evaluate and  
22 report the issues, concerns and ideas of the youth across this  
23 Commonwealth to create a proactive means of participation in  
24 State government.

25 (b) Appointment and terms of members.--The commission shall  
26 consist of nine members, two members each appointed by the  
27 President pro tempore and the Minority Leader of the Senate and  
28 two members each appointed by the Majority Leader and the  
29 Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. Each appointee  
30 shall serve a term of four years. The ninth member of the

1 commission shall be a youth member. The youth member shall be  
2 one of the 50 youth representatives, selected under section 7,  
3 who is elected by a majority of the youth representatives. The  
4 youth member of the commission shall take office one year after  
5 the effective date of this act. A member shall be 40 years of  
6 age or younger at the time of appointment, and may serve the  
7 remainder of his or her term should the member reach age 41  
8 during the member's term.

9 (c) Director.--The position of director of the commission is  
10 created for the purpose of administering the Pennsylvania Youth  
11 Commission. The director shall be the chief administrator of all  
12 guidelines, policies and initiatives set forth by the commission  
13 and shall be responsible for maintenance and distribution of the  
14 budget.

15 Section 5. Powers and duties of commission.

16 The commission shall have the following powers and duties:

17 (1) Appoint a director of the commission who shall serve  
18 at the pleasure of the commission.

19 (2) Solicit donations and sponsors, in addition to any  
20 State appropriation, for expenses of the commission.

21 (3) Establish ten regions throughout this Commonwealth  
22 of equal population and reasonable geography.

23 (4) Create and distribute a youth representative  
24 application and promulgate guidelines for the acceptance and  
25 confidential review of the applications.

26 (5) Annually select the recipient of the Pennsylvania  
27 Youth Commission Scholarship, as provided under section  
28 section 9.

29 (6) Promulgate rules and regulations to administer this  
30 act.

1 Section 6. Prohibited activities.

2 A commissioner shall not do any of the following:

3 (1) Receive monetary compensation for service as a  
4 commissioner.

5 (2) Require any representative to participate in any  
6 form of campaign activity or establish any form of punishment  
7 for refusal to participate.

8 (3) Use an event, meeting or activity of the commission  
9 as a tool for campaigning or a means to deliver campaign  
10 rhetoric.

11 Section 7. Youth representatives.

12 (a) Number of representatives.--There shall be 50 youth  
13 representatives to the commission, consisting of five youth  
14 selected from each of the ten geographical regions of this  
15 Commonwealth as established by the commission. Each region shall  
16 be represented by at least one member of each sex.

17 (b) Selection and eligibility.--The commissioners, in  
18 consultation with the director, shall select the youth  
19 representatives. Each youth representative shall exemplify the  
20 characteristics set forth by the commission. A representative  
21 shall not be younger than 13 years of age or older than 18 years  
22 of age.

23 (c) Term.--A representative may serve until the end of the  
24 calendar year in which the representative reaches his or her  
25 18th birthday.

26 (d) Attendance.--The commission shall establish a policy  
27 regarding the frequency of and attendance by representatives at  
28 regional and Statewide representative meetings. There shall be  
29 not less than four regional representative meetings and one  
30 Statewide representative meeting per year.

(e) Resignation or removal.--A representative may be relieved of his or her position as follows:

(1) Upon approval by the commissioners of a representative's request that he or she be excused.

(2) Upon a decision of the commission to remove the representative.

Section 8. Report to General Assembly.

Each calendar year, the youth member of the commission shall separately address the Senate and the House of Representatives on the floor during a regular session. This youth member's address to the General Assembly shall be a comprehensive annual report on the activities, concerns and ideas of the Pennsylvania Youth Commission and an opportunity for members of the General Assembly to receive and consider the input of the youth who are the future of this Commonwealth.

Section 9. Pennsylvania Youth Commission Scholarship.

(a) Award.--The commission shall annually award a scholarship to one of the 50 youth representatives to the commission.

(b) Selection of recipient.--The director shall annually identify and submit a list to the commission members of five youth representatives who consistently demonstrate leadership and exemplary service to the commission. The commission members shall select one of the five candidates submitted by the director to receive the award.

(c) Amount.--The scholarship shall be no less than \$5,000 and shall be presented to the recipient during a Statewide meeting of the youth representatives.

Section 10. Effective date.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.