

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, LEACH, COHEN, CUTLER, MAHONEY, KORTZ, PALLONE AND THOMAS, APRIL 23, 2007

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, APRIL 8, 2008

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; AND MAKING AN <—
4 APPROPRIATION.

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

7 Section 1. Short title.

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

10 Section 2. Declaration of policy

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

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

15 (2) Despite age or voting record, each individual

1 residing in this Commonwealth is part of the public trust.

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

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

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

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

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

1 it is the intent of the General Assembly to tap the invaluable
2 resource of young minds and ideas that have been consistently
3 disassociated with public officials, government and the status
4 quo of the political process, and in turn produce involved
5 citizens, leaders and pillars of young adulthood.

6 Section 3. Definitions.

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

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

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

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

16 Section 4. Pennsylvania Youth Commission.

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

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

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

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

16 Section 5. Powers and duties of commission.

17 The commission shall have the following powers and duties:

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

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

22 ~~(3)~~ (2) Establish ten regions throughout this <—
23 Commonwealth of equal population and reasonable geography.

24 ~~(4)~~ (3) Create and distribute a youth representative <—
25 application and promulgate guidelines for the acceptance and
26 confidential review of the applications.

27 ~~(5)~~ (4) Annually select the recipient of the <—
28 Pennsylvania Youth Commission Scholarship, as provided under
29 section section 9.

30 ~~(6)~~ (5) Promulgate rules and regulations to administer <—

1 this act.

2 Section 6. Prohibited activities.

3 A commissioner shall not do any of the following:

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

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

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

12 Section 7. Youth representatives.

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

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

24 (c) Term.--A representative may serve until the end of the
25 calendar year in which the representative reaches his or her
26 18th birthday.

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

1 Statewide representative meeting per year.

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

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

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

8 Section 8. Report to General Assembly.

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

17 Section 9. Pennsylvania Youth Commission Scholarship.

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

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

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

30 SECTION 10. APPROPRIATION.

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1 THE SUM OF \$50,000, OR AS MUCH THEREOF AS MAY BE NECESSARY,
2 IS HEREBY APPROPRIATED TO THE PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH COMMISSION FOR
3 THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2008, TO JUNE 30, 2009, TO CARRY OUT THE
4 PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT.

5 Section ~~10~~ 11. Effective date.

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6 This act shall take effect in 60 days.