

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 344 Session of  
2010

INTRODUCED BY GREENLEAF, RAFFERTY, O'PAKE, WASHINGTON,  
TARTAGLIONE, FONTANA, LEACH, ALLOWAY, WILLIAMS AND FARNESE,  
MAY 13, 2010

AMENDED, JUNE 15, 2010

## A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to establish a  
2 criminal justice advisory committee to study the issues  
3 ~~raised by The Philadelphia Inquirer~~ OF HIGH VIOLENT CRIME  
4 RATES, LOW CONVICTION RATES, THE BAIL SYSTEM, WITNESS  
5 INTIMIDATION and any other relevant issues regarding the  
6 criminal justice system in Philadelphia to develop solutions  
7 for problems that are identified and to make a report to the  
8 Senate with recommendations.

9 WHEREAS, From December 13 through December 16, 2009, The  
10 *Philadelphia Inquirer* published a series of articles entitled  
11 "Justice: Delayed, Dismissed, Denied," ~~describing a criminal~~  
12 ~~justice system in disarray~~ REGARDING THE PHILADELPHIA CRIMINAL  
13 JUSTICE SYSTEM; and

14 WHEREAS, ~~The Philadelphia Inquirer~~ IT WAS reported that "For  
15 ~~three consecutive years~~, Philadelphia has had the highest  
16 violent crime rate among the nation's 10 largest ~~cities~~" CITIES  
17 IN THE LAST THREE YEARS but, with the exception of murder cases,  
18 ~~Philadelphia~~ ITS conviction rates trail the nation's in rape,  
19 robbery, and serious assault ~~cases~~; CASES; and

20 Whereas, ~~The Philadelphia Inquirer reported that~~

~~"Philadelphia defendants are thumbing their noses at the city's judges and victims, given a free pass by the system's ineffective bail program — and skipping court in huge numbers";~~

IT WAS STATED THE BAIL PROGRAM IS INEFFECTIVE; and

~~WHEREAS, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that "Witness intimidation pervades the Philadelphia criminal courts, increasingly extracting a heavy toll in no show witnesses, recanted testimony — and collapsed cases";~~

IT IS ALLEGED THAT WITNESS INTIMIDATION IS COMMON; and

~~WHEREAS, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that many cases fall apart in Municipal Court, "Of robbery and aggravated assault cases filed in 2006 and 2007 in Municipal Court, about half were immediately tossed or withdrawn — and never went to Common Pleas Court, where felonies are decided"; and~~

WHEREAS, On April 19, 2010, as a follow-up to *The Philadelphia Inquirer's* series, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a public hearing in Philadelphia to receive testimony relating to the Philadelphia criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, Witnesses told committee members that they would welcome a forum that would include all stakeholders in which they could discuss Philadelphia's criminal justice system with the other stakeholders and develop solutions; and

WHEREAS, The Joint State Government Commission has a history of success in bringing together all stakeholders on a particular issue and developing a consensus on how best to move forward in resolving the issue; and

WHEREAS, Study of the criminal justice system in Philadelphia would not only benefit Philadelphia, but the lessons learned and recommendations made could benefit the criminal justice systems in counties throughout Pennsylvania; therefore be it

1       RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Joint State Government  
2 Commission to establish a criminal justice advisory committee to  
3 study the issues ~~raised by The Philadelphia Inquirer~~ OF HIGH  
4 VIOLENT CRIME RATES, LOW CONVICTION RATES, THE BAIL SYSTEM,  
5 WITNESS INTIMIDATION and any other relevant issues regarding the  
6 criminal justice system in Philadelphia and to develop solutions  
7 for the problems that are identified; and be it further



8       RESOLVED, That the advisory committee be comprised of  
9 approximately 30 members and include persons representing all  
10 relevant aspects of and participants in the criminal justice  
11 system in Philadelphia, including, but not limited to, law  
12 enforcement, prosecutors, criminal defense attorneys, the  
13 judiciary, crime victims and witnesses, probation and  
14 corrections; and be it further

15       RESOLVED, That the advisory committee may receive input from  
16 academia, private and public organizations involved in criminal  
17 justice issues, other criminal justice experts and the general  
18 public; and be it further

19       RESOLVED, That the advisory committee make a report to the  
20 Senate with recommendations no later than 18 months from the  
21 date that this resolution is adopted.