

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 244 Session of
2011

INTRODUCED BY MURPHY, W. KELLER, BRADFORD, BRENNAN, CALTAGIRONE,
D. COSTA, CUTLER, DAVIS, DIGIROLAMO, FABRIZIO, FREEMAN,
GEORGE, HENNESSEY, KORTZ, MANN, MATZIE, MILLARD, PARKER,
PASHINSKI, PAYTON, READSHAW, ROSS, SANTONI, K. SMITH, THOMAS,
VULAKOVICH AND DONATUCCI, APRIL 26, 2011

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND INDUSTRY, APRIL 26, 2011

A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Consolidated Omnibus
2 Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) in 2011.

3 WHEREAS, The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act
4 of 1985 (COBRA) was approved by the Congress of the United
5 States and signed into law on April 7, 1986, in order to provide
6 workers and their families the opportunity to temporarily
7 continue needed group health care coverage in instances where
8 coverage would otherwise end; and

9 WHEREAS, Prior to COBRA, workers and families had little
10 ability to stay on employer-based group health care plans after
11 job loss or other separation from an employer and often
12 experienced gaps in health care coverage; and

13 WHEREAS, The concept of continuing coverage began through the
14 work of a citizens' group called the Older Women's League, which
15 petitioned for laws to help women keep their health care
16 coverage after divorce or the death of a spouse; and

1 WHEREAS, The passage of COBRA ensured that millions of
2 workers and their dependents could extend their health benefits
3 for up to 18 or 36 months after leaving a job or reducing work
4 hours or after life events such as divorce, retirement or the
5 death of a working family member; and

6 WHEREAS, COBRA provides protections by directing health plans
7 of employers with 20 or more employees to offer continuation of
8 coverage at the existing cost of the premium in addition to
9 minimal administrative costs; and

10 WHEREAS, COBRA has also played an important role in helping
11 workers who transition to new jobs by providing coverage through
12 waiting periods or preexisting condition exclusion periods that
13 may be required in subsequent health plans; and

14 WHEREAS, In recent years, COBRA has provided access to health
15 care coverage to many workers who have lost jobs during the
16 recession; and

17 WHEREAS, COBRA remains a significant law for working
18 families, as the United States Census Bureau reports more than
19 50 million or 16.7% of individuals nationwide were without
20 health insurance in 2009 and the United States Bureau of Labor
21 Statistics calculates the national unemployment rate for March
22 2011 to be 8.8%; and

23 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Labor has estimated
24 that in the last 25 years, nearly 50 million workers and family
25 members have relied on COBRA insurance coverage; and

26 WHEREAS, COBRA established an important safety net for many
27 workers and their families, and the Congress of the United
28 States and many state governments have supported additional
29 measures to expand coverage or improve upon this law; therefore
30 be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commemorate the
2 25th anniversary of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget
3 Reconciliation Act of 1985 in 2011.