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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 250 Session of  
2011

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INTRODUCED BY WARD, VANCE, SCARNATI, PILEGGI, FONTANA,  
GREENLEAF, TOMLINSON, SCHWANK, BAKER, PIPPY, ERICKSON, WAUGH,  
D. WHITE, BRUBAKER, ARGALL, FERLO, PICCOLA, MENSCH, RAFFERTY,  
YAW, VOGEL, GORDNER, STACK, YUDICHAK, EICHELBERGER AND  
ALLOWAY, DECEMBER 12, 2011

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REFERRED TO AGING AND YOUTH, DECEMBER 12, 2011

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A RESOLUTION

1 Establishing the Task Force on Child Protection.

2 WHEREAS, The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

3 (1) Recent events require a review of laws and  
4 procedures relating to the reporting of child abuse and the  
5 protection of the health and safety of children.

6 (2) A review of these laws and procedures will help to  
7 ensure that the Commonwealth is able to adequately protect  
8 its children.

9 (3) It is the responsibility of the Commonwealth to  
10 protect its citizens, particularly children.

11 (4) Therefore, the General Assembly shall establish a  
12 task force to conduct a thorough and comprehensive review to:

13 (i) ascertain any inadequacies relating to the  
14 mandatory reporting of child abuse; and

15 (ii) restore public confidence in the ability of the  
16 Commonwealth to protect the victims of child abuse;

1 therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That the Task Force on Child Protection be  
3 established; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the task force consist of the following  
5 members, appointed within 25 days after the adoption of this  
6 resolution by both chambers:

7 (1) Six members knowledgeable and experienced in issues  
8 relating to child abuse or providing services to victims of  
9 child abuse as follows:

10 (i) Three members appointed by the President pro  
11 tempore of the Senate, in consultation with the Majority  
12 Leader and the Minority Leader of the Senate. A member  
13 under this subparagraph may be a member of the Senate.

14 (ii) Three members appointed by the Speaker of the  
15 House of Representatives, in consultation with the  
16 Majority Leader and the Minority Leader of the House of  
17 Representatives. A member under this subparagraph may be  
18 a member of the House of Representatives.

19 (2) Four members appointed by the Governor as follows:

20 (i) One member shall be a member of the general  
21 public.

22 (ii) One member shall be a member of a victim  
23 organization or a children and youth services  
24 organization who is directly involved in providing  
25 services to victims of child abuse.

26 (iii) One member experienced in the operation and  
27 interaction between a county children and youth agency  
28 and the Commonwealth.

29 (iv) A district attorney.

30 (3) The Secretary of Public Welfare or a designee who

1 shall be an employee of the department. The designee shall be  
2 appointed in writing, and a copy shall be submitted to the  
3 chairman of the task force;

4 and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the Governor select the chairperson of the  
6 task force; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the task force conduct its business as  
8 follows:

9 (1) The physical presence of six members constitutes a  
10 quorum of the task force.

11 (2) Action of the task force shall be authorized or  
12 ratified by majority vote of its members.

13 (3) A member not physically present may participate by  
14 teleconference or video conference.

15 (4) The following shall apply:

16 (i) The task force shall meet as necessary but no  
17 fewer than five times prior to September 30, 2012.  
18 Additional meetings may be called by the chairperson as  
19 necessary.

20 (ii) The chairperson shall schedule a meeting upon  
21 written request of eight members of the task force.

22 (iii) The first meeting shall be convened within 45  
23 days.

24 (iv) The task force shall hold public hearings as  
25 necessary to obtain the information required to conduct  
26 its review.

27 (v) The Department of Public Welfare, the Joint  
28 State Government Commission and the Juvenile Courts  
29 Judges' Commission shall cooperate to provide  
30 administrative or other assistance to the task force.

1 (vi) Members shall not receive compensation but  
2 shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses  
3 incurred in service of the task force;

4 and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the task force have the following powers:

6 (1) To examine and analyze the practices, processes and  
7 procedures relating to the response to child abuse.

8 (2) To review and analyze law, procedures, practices and  
9 rules relating to the reporting of child abuse.

10 (3) To hold public hearings for the taking of testimony  
11 and the requesting of documents.

12 (4) The chairperson shall have the power to administer  
13 oaths and affirmations to witnesses appearing before the task  
14 force;

15 and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the task force have the following duties:

17 (1) To accept and review written comments from  
18 individuals and organizations.

19 (2) To make, by November 30, 2012, a final report to the  
20 Governor, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

21 (3) Based on its review, the report under paragraph (2)  
22 shall include recommendations:

23 (i) To improve the reporting of child abuse.

24 (ii) To implement any necessary changes in State  
25 statutes and practices, policies and procedures relating  
26 to child abuse.

27 (iii) To train appropriate individuals in the  
28 reporting of child abuse.

29 (4) To make reports as follows:

30 (i) The task force may file status reports and

1 updates with the Governor and the Senate and the House of  
2 Representatives as it deems appropriate.

3 (ii) A report under this paragraph shall be adopted  
4 at a public meeting.

5 (iii) A report under this paragraph shall be a  
6 public record under the act of February 14, 2008 (P.L.6,  
7 No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law;

8 and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the task force expire December 31, 2012.