

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 974 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY THOMAS, AUGUST 19, 2016

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, AUGUST 19, 2016

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to study the
2 issue of higher education student loan debt and to report to
3 the House of Representatives with its findings and
4 recommendations.

5 WHEREAS, Recent reports describe an association between the
6 decreased State funding levels of higher education institutions
7 and the levels of increased student debt; and

8 WHEREAS, In 2014, the average Pennsylvania student graduated
9 from a four-year degree program with a total debt of \$33,264,
10 which is an increase of \$13,708 since 2004, when the average
11 amount of debt per Pennsylvania student was \$19,556; and

12 WHEREAS, In 2004, State funding to both State-owned and
13 State-related schools was \$990,900,000 and in 2014, it dropped
14 by \$84,900,000 to a total of \$906,000,000; and

15 WHEREAS, In the same 10-year span, student loan debt has
16 increased by 70%; therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
18 State Government Commission to study the issue of higher
19 education student loan debt; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission's study
2 of higher education student loan debt review all of the
3 following:

4 (1) The adverse effect of decreased State funding to
5 higher education institutions and the increase of student
6 loan debt in this Commonwealth.

7 (2) How secondary and postsecondary institutions can
8 better educate the students of this Commonwealth on topics
9 dealing with personal finances and the accumulation of debt.

10 (3) The viability of a Statewide student loan
11 forgiveness program to attract and retain younger
12 professionals.

13 (4) The feasibility and practicality of counseling
14 students into more associate degree programs, vocational or
15 trade schools.

16 (5) The issue of financial aid disbursement to students
17 from middle income families who make too much money for need-
18 based financial aid but still cannot afford the high cost of
19 college;

20 and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the final report include any recommendations
22 for changes in State laws, practices, policies and procedures
23 relating to higher education student loan debt; and be it
24 further

25 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue
26 the report to the House of Representatives with its findings and
27 recommendations no later than one year after the adoption of
28 this resolution.