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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

## No. 11

Session of  
1989

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INTRODUCED BY O'PAKE, MELLOW, STAPLETON, AFFLERBACH, BODACK,  
REGOLI, JONES, MUSTO, LYNCH, REIBMAN, ROSS, SHAFFER, BELAN,  
BAKER AND HOPPER, FEBRUARY 3, 1989

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AMENDED, APRIL 25, 1989

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A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to update the  
2 study concluded in 1975 of all services rendered to children  
3 relative to problems of abuse, delinquency, dependency,  
4 neglect and mental health.

5 WHEREAS, Many changes have occurred in the children's  
6 services delivery system and in the dynamics of children's  
7 issues since issuance of the 1975 Report of the Task Force on  
8 Services to Delinquent, Dependent and Neglected Children; and

9 WHEREAS, The county offices of children and youth services  
10 are the primary service providers for at-risk, abused,  
11 dependent, neglected and delinquent children; and

12 WHEREAS, The Child Protective Services Law was enacted in  
13 1975 to establish a separate system for the reporting and  
14 investigating of child abuse, and to mandate that the counties  
15 provide services to victims and their families, without  
16 providing funding mechanisms; and

17 WHEREAS, The General Assembly passed Act 148 of 1976 to  
18 provide a formula for the reimbursement to counties of costs

1 incurred in the provision of mandated services to children,  
2 which formula was designed to provide incentives to development  
3 of deinstitutionalized services; and

4 WHEREAS, The General Assembly reacted to escalating costs of  
5 children's services by taking action in 1980-1981 to limit the  
6 State's liability under Act 148 to the amount of funds  
7 appropriated; and

8 WHEREAS, Many counties have since had to provide a financial  
9 "overmatch" to pay annually for the costs of mandated children's  
10 services, thus creating a hardship for county governments and  
11 the taxpayers they serve, and placing at jeopardy the quality of  
12 services provided to children; and

13 WHEREAS, The funding problem is exacerbated by the increasing  
14 severity of child abuse cases, by the escalating incidence of  
15 child sexual abuse cases, and by the liberal referral practices  
16 of the juvenile courts and the county mental health offices to  
17 the offices of children and youth services; and

18 WHEREAS, The mission of children and youth services, to serve  
19 first those children most at-risk as abused, neglected and  
20 delinquent, is diluted by unpredictable caseloads which include  
21 truants, chronic runaways and adoptions; and

22 WHEREAS, There appears to be a need for a projected specific  
23 program, including services and funding, for mentally ill  
24 children which could be accessed by county children and youth  
25 services; and

26 WHEREAS, All reasonable estimates indicate that the funding  
27 crisis will continue to grow worse and thereby further  
28 jeopardize the quality of children's services, if not the  
29 children themselves; therefore be it

30 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission be

1 directed to study all of the various dynamics impacting on the  
2 county offices of children and youth services to determine how  
3 the competing interests of problem children can best be served;  
4 and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the commission is directed to study the  
6 funding of those services and propose a funding mechanism which  
7 will insure that State-mandated services are appropriately  
8 delivered with quality assurance; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That appropriate reorganization of services and  
10 needed mandates be recommended, specifically as they relate to  
11 the needs of mentally ill children; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, THAT, TO ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL OF MAKING A  
13 REORGANIZATION RECOMMENDATION, THE COMMISSION SHALL CREATE A  
14 BIPARTISAN, BICAMERAL TASK FORCE; AND BE IT FURTHER

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15 RESOLVED, THAT THE TASK FORCE MAY HOLD HEARINGS, TAKE  
16 TESTIMONY AND MAKE ITS INVESTIGATIONS AT SUCH PLACES AS IT DEEMS  
17 NECESSARY THROUGHOUT THIS COMMONWEALTH. EACH MEMBER OF THE TASK  
18 FORCE SHALL HAVE POWER TO ADMINISTER OATHS AND AFFIRMATIONS TO  
19 WITNESSES APPEARING BEFORE IT; AND BE IT FURTHER

20 RESOLVED, That the ~~commission~~ TASK FORCE report its findings  
21 and recommendations, together with drafts of legislation  
22 recommended by it, to the General Assembly as soon as possible.

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