

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 187 Session of
1997

INTRODUCED BY FAIRCHILD, HUTCHINSON AND PHILLIPS, JUNE 2, 1997

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, JUNE 2, 1997

A RESOLUTION

1 Providing for the establishment of a task force in the Health
2 and Human Services Committee to study and determine the
3 impact of the Department of Public Welfare's policy of
4 closing Pennsylvania's mental retardation centers and the
5 department's five-year plan to redesign Pennsylvania's mental
6 retardation services system.

7 WHEREAS, Support of family and friends, quality of care,
8 financial resources and State support are necessary for
9 Pennsylvania's citizens with mental retardation; and

10 WHEREAS, Of the 1,115,000 citizens with mental retardation
11 and their families and communities in this Commonwealth, 64,000
12 receive residential services in the community and 3,100 reside
13 in State centers; and

14 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is refusing to
15 accept citizens with critical needs into mental retardation
16 centers, which has substantially increased per diem costs; and

17 WHEREAS, The Secretary of Public Welfare and the Deputy
18 Secretary for Mental Retardation have initiated the policy of
19 closing all of the mental retardation centers which have been

1 meeting the needs of people with mental retardation and their
2 families; and

3 WHEREAS, The Department of Public Welfare's policy of closing
4 mental retardation centers will have a significant impact on the
5 lives of individuals living in the centers and their families;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, The policy will also result in a critical impact
8 upon the safety and economic strength of the communities being
9 served by the centers; and

10 WHEREAS, The implementation of this policy would require the
11 relocation of thousands of Pennsylvanians with mental
12 retardation into alternative living situations; and

13 WHEREAS, The Department of Public Welfare's policy for
14 closing and the proposal for redesigning the mental retardation
15 service systems of our Commonwealth have created questions and
16 concerns from individuals living in the centers, friends and
17 families of those individuals, members of the community and
18 employees of the closing facilities; and

19 WHEREAS, The closure policy was undertaken prior to the
20 complete review of the department's five-year redesign plan; and

21 WHEREAS, This policy has not been thoroughly investigated by
22 the members of the General Assembly; therefore be it

23 RESOLVED, That a special task force be created to investigate
24 the Department of Public Welfare's policy of closing mental
25 retardation centers and the five-year plan to redesign
26 Pennsylvania's mental retardation services system; and be it
27 further

28 RESOLVED, That the task force consist of 11 members, six from
29 the majority party and five from the minority party; and be it
30 further

1 RESOLVED, That four of the six members from the majority
2 party be appointed from the Health and Human Services Committee
3 by the chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee; and
4 be it further

5 RESOLVED, That three of the five members from the minority
6 party be appointed from the Health and Human Services Committee
7 by the minority chairman of the Health and Human Services
8 Committee; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the remaining two members from the majority
10 party be appointed by the Speaker of the House of
11 Representatives; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the remaining two members from the minority
13 party be appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of
14 Representatives; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Speaker of the House of Representatives
16 appoint the chairperson of the task force from among its
17 members; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the task force may hold hearings, take
19 testimony and make its investigations at such places as it deems
20 necessary in this Commonwealth. Each member of the task force
21 shall have the power to administer oaths and affirmations to
22 witnesses appearing before the task force; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the House of
24 Representatives be authorized to pay for all necessary,
25 appropriate and proper expenses incurred by the task force.