

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 303 Session of  
1999

INTRODUCED BY BUTKOVITZ, KELLER, PERZEL, J. TAYLOR AND DeWEESE,  
OCTOBER 26, 1999

ADOPTED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
OCTOBER 26, 1999

## A RESOLUTION

1 Authorizing and directing the Subcommittee on Cities, Counties -  
2 First Class of the Urban Affairs Committee to conduct an  
3 investigation into the problems relating to school violence  
4 and possession of weapons in the Philadelphia School  
5 District.

6 WHEREAS, Students, teachers and other school personnel  
7 possess a fundamental human right to teach and learn in a safe  
8 school environment; and

9 WHEREAS, It has been reported that there were 1,566 assaults  
10 on teachers, students and other school personnel in the  
11 Philadelphia School District during the 1998-99 school year  
12 compared to 1,041 such assaults during the 1993-94 school year;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Nine hundred and five weapons were confiscated on  
15 Philadelphia School District property during the 1998-99 school  
16 year while only 15 students were actually expelled for weapons  
17 violations; and

18 WHEREAS, This expulsion rate for weapons violations is  
19 particularly troublesome in light of a State law which requires

1 the expulsion of students who possess weapons on school property  
2 except in cases where the superintendent recommends leniency;  
3 and

4 WHEREAS, An assistant principal at Bartram High School in  
5 Philadelphia was recently shot by a ninth grade student under  
6 circumstances where the school had failed to install a metal  
7 detector which had been delivered to Bartram earlier this year;  
8 and

9 WHEREAS, It has been reported that 12 other high schools were  
10 scheduled to receive metal detectors and X-ray machines but that  
11 only two of these machines are in operation; and

12 WHEREAS, There is a substantial concern that the Philadelphia  
13 School District has failed to establish an adequate system of  
14 alternative schools for disruptive students; and

15 WHEREAS, The concern about safety in the Philadelphia School  
16 District is reflected in the fact that the Philadelphia City  
17 Council has recently adopted a resolution demanding that school  
18 superintendent David Hornbeck appear before the council with a  
19 school safety plan; and

20 WHEREAS, It is apparent that the Philadelphia School District  
21 is failing in its duty to create a safe learning and teaching  
22 environment for students and school personnel; and therefore be  
23 it

24 RESOLVED, That the Subcommittee on Cities, Counties - First  
25 Class of the Urban Affairs Committee is hereby authorized and  
26 directed to examine, investigate and make a complete study of  
27 any and all matters relating to the problems of violence,  
28 possession of weapons in the Philadelphia School District and  
29 the failure of the Philadelphia School District to effectively  
30 deal with the problem of weapons and violence in its schools;

1 and be it further

2       RESOLVED, That the subcommittee may hold hearings, take  
3 testimony and make its investigations at such places as it deems  
4 necessary in this Commonwealth. Each member of the subcommittee  
5 shall have the power to administer oaths and affirmations to  
6 witnesses appearing before the committee; and be it further

7       RESOLVED, That the Urban Affairs Committee and the Education  
8 Committee assist the subcommittee to the fullest extent  
9 possible; and be it further

10       RESOLVED, That the subcommittee is authorized to hire or  
11 contract for such staff as it deems necessary and the expenses  
12 incurred by the subcommittee shall be paid from accounts under  
13 the control of the Chief Clerk; and be it further

14       RESOLVED, That the subcommittee shall report its findings  
15 together with its recommendations for remedial legislation or  
16 other appropriate action at the earliest practicable date to the  
17 House of Representatives.