
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 268 Session of
2002

INTRODUCED BY ORIE, KITCHEN, COSTA, TARTAGLIONE, HELFRICK,
LEMMOND, SCHWARTZ, C. WILLIAMS, MURPHY, BODACK, GREENLEAF,
A. WILLIAMS AND CONTI, SEPTEMBER 20, 2002

REFERRED TO JUDICIARY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2002

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to study whether
2 minorities are systematically underrepresented in juries for
3 criminal proceedings across this Commonwealth, including the
4 reasons therefor, and to report its findings to the General
5 Assembly.

6 WHEREAS, There is a constitutional guarantee for a defendant
7 in a criminal proceeding to be given a fair trial by an
8 impartial jury in this Commonwealth; and

9 WHEREAS, Recent evidence finds that the system which selects
10 people for jury duty in a portion of this Commonwealth
11 consistently overlooks blacks and favors whites; and

12 WHEREAS, According to a recent investigation by the
13 Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, people living in white neighborhoods
14 in Allegheny County are more than twice as likely to be called
15 for jury duty as residents of black communities; and

16 WHEREAS, An analysis of a five-month survey of persons who
17 reported for jury duty in Allegheny County revealed that the
18 county's criminal jury rooms are typically less than 5% black,
19 while blacks comprise 11% of the county's adult population; and

1 WHEREAS, This imbalance casts reasonable doubt on the
2 guarantee to a fair trial in this Commonwealth; therefore be it
3 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Joint State Government
4 Commission to study whether minorities are systematically
5 underrepresented in juries for criminal proceedings across this
6 Commonwealth, including the reasons therefor, and to report its
7 findings to the General Assembly within 120 days of passage.