

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 148 Session of
2003

INTRODUCED BY SAYLOR, BARRAR, T. STEVENSON, BROWNE, CRAHALLA,
CRUZ, CURRY, FAIRCHILD, GEIST, HARPER, HERMAN, HERSHEY,
HORSEY, JAMES, LAUGHLIN, LESCOVITZ, MACKERETH, R. MILLER,
PETRONE, READSHAW, REICHLEY, RUBLEY, SOLOBAY, STABACK,
R. STEVENSON, TIGUE, WASHINGTON, YOUNGBLOOD AND YUDICHAK,
MARCH 18, 2003

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, MARCH 18, 2003

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to
2 conduct a study on the feasibility of regionalization for
3 volunteer fire departments and to submit a report.

4 WHEREAS, In earlier times, communities in Pennsylvania
5 organized fire services and built stations based on needs for
6 neighborhood fire suppression; and

7 WHEREAS, When equipment was pulled to the scene of a fire by
8 hand or by horse over very limited systems of roads, it made
9 sense to establish multiple fire companies to serve new and
10 growing communities; and

11 WHEREAS, This system of establishment served those
12 communities well and continued to be the only practical solution
13 to fire protection through the early 1900s; and

14 WHEREAS, As motorized equipment replaced the hand-drawn and
15 horse-drawn apparatus, early fire companies continued to perform
16 their duties even though the reason for their locations and

1 existence largely was being negated by progress in
2 transportation and infrastructure technologies; and

3 WHEREAS, Ethnic, fraternal and social affinities often
4 contributed to the establishment and continuity of many
5 departments and stations; and

6 WHEREAS, Through the 1950s there were no shortages of
7 volunteers, costs were not insurmountable and community
8 financial support was generally sufficient to sustain a
9 protection system that had its basis in history and tradition;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, At the beginning of the 21st century, Pennsylvania's
12 historic and traditional fire protection system is being
13 challenged by a substantial decline in volunteers, an aging
14 population, dramatically higher costs and decreased community
15 support; and

16 WHEREAS, Some communities seek to address these challenges by
17 merging or consolidating their fire protection services; and

18 WHEREAS, Many fire service leaders and local government
19 officials today resist the notion that consolidating or merging
20 services represents a logical approach to addressing these
21 challenges; therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the
23 Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study on
24 the feasibility of regionalization for volunteer fire
25 departments, make recommendations and present a plan for such
26 regionalization and to submit a report to the House of
27 Representatives.