
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 131 Session of
2005

INTRODUCED BY D. WHITE, ROBBINS, PUNT, KITCHEN, BROWNE, GORDNER,
FERLO, STACK, TARTAGLIONE, ORIE, PIPPY, COSTA, GREENLEAF,
LOGAN, WOZNIAK, M. WHITE, PICCOLA, O'PAKE, RAFFERTY, PILEGGI,
WENGER, LEMMOND, WAUGH, SCARNATI AND ARMSTRONG, JUNE 17, 2005

REFERRED TO VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,
JUNE 17, 2005

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to
2 conduct a comprehensive study and review of veterans services
3 in Pennsylvania, exploring a broad range of options on how
4 best to organize, fund, staff and operate veterans programs
5 in order to provide the best possible services to
6 Pennsylvania veterans and their families in the most cost-
7 effective and efficient manner.

8 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has approximately 1.2 million veterans
9 who have served in the armed forces of the United States; and

10 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania provides services to its veterans and
11 their families through a variety of programs managed at the
12 State and local levels; and

13 WHEREAS, The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is
14 the lead State agency for many veterans programs, including six
15 State veterans homes, Scotland School for Veterans' Children,
16 the real property tax exemption program for certain disabled
17 veterans, the blind and paralyzed veterans' pensions, the
18 veterans' emergency assistance program, the veterans'
19 educational gratuity program and four veterans' service officers

1 to provide direct services to veterans; and

2 WHEREAS, The State Veterans' Commission, the advisory
3 councils for the State veterans homes and the Pennsylvania
4 Veterans' Memorial Commission carry out various statutory
5 responsibilities and provide advice and input concerning
6 veterans programs; and

7 WHEREAS, The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has
8 done an outstanding job in managing and overseeing the growth of
9 Pennsylvania's veterans programs, including doubling the number
10 of veterans homes over the last ten years; and

11 WHEREAS, The Governor's Veterans Outreach and Assistance
12 Program, under the aegis of the Department of Labor and
13 Industry, provides a variety of services to veterans with an
14 emphasis on assisting in employment and employment-related
15 training; and

16 WHEREAS, At the local level, county directors of veterans
17 affairs and county governments provide a variety of services to
18 veterans; and

19 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania War Veterans' Council and the State
20 Veterans' Commission have requested consideration of
21 establishment of a separate Department of Veterans Affairs for
22 Pennsylvania; and

23 WHEREAS, A comprehensive, professional evaluation of how best
24 to organize, fund and staff government at all levels to best
25 serve Pennsylvania's veterans and their families will assist the
26 General Assembly and the Administration in making key decisions
27 about the future of veterans programs in this Commonwealth;
28 therefore be it

29 RESOLVED (the House of Representatives concurring), That the
30 Senate direct the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to

1 conduct a comprehensive study and review of veterans services in
2 Pennsylvania to include an examination of how such services are
3 organized, managed, funded and staffed at the State and local
4 levels as well as a review of the composition, functions and
5 duties of the State Veterans' Commission and the advisory
6 councils for veterans homes; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
8 compare how veterans services are provided in Pennsylvania to
9 provision of services in other states; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the study include recommendations on how
11 Pennsylvania should best organize, manage, fund and staff
12 veterans programs at the State and local levels to provide the
13 best services to Pennsylvania veterans and their families in the
14 most cost-effective and efficient manner; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the study review and consider the costs and
16 benefits of a broad range of options for best providing veterans
17 services, including, but not limited to, reorganizing the
18 executive branch of State government to establish a separate
19 Department of Veterans Affairs; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That, in order to assist the efforts of the
21 Legislative Budget and Finance Committee in conducting this
22 study, a working group be established consisting of the Adjutant
23 General or her designee, the Deputy Adjutant General for
24 Veterans Affairs or his designee, the Secretary of Labor and
25 Industry or his designee, the chairman of the State Veterans'
26 Commission and five additional members of the commission
27 appointed by the commission chairman, the President of the
28 Pennsylvania State Association of County Directors of Veterans
29 Affairs or his designee and the chairman and minority chairman
30 of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee of

1 the Senate and the chairman and minority chairman of the
2 Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee of the
3 House of Representatives or their designees; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the working group provide advice and input to
5 assist the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee in gaining
6 various perspectives on the tasks assigned to it; and be it
7 further

8 RESOLVED, That the staff of the Department of Military and
9 Veterans Affairs assist the Legislative Budget and Finance
10 Committee and the working group with the study described in this
11 resolution; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
13 or the staff thereof hold such public hearings and meetings as
14 they deem appropriate in the course of the study; and be it
15 further

16 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
17 file a report containing its findings and recommendations no
18 later than November 30, 2006.