

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 706 Session of
2009

INTRODUCED BY HORNAMAN, FABRIZIO, GIBBONS, GROVE, MELIO, MOUL,
READSHAW AND K. SMITH, MARCH 3, 2009

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, MARCH 3, 2009

AN ACT

1 Providing for convening the General Assembly following the
2 general election.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Emergency
7 Legislative Sessions Act.

8 Section 2. Definitions.

9 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
10 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
11 context clearly indicates otherwise:

12 "Act of terrorism." A violent act, or an act that is
13 dangerous to human life, property or infrastructure, that is
14 committed by an individual or individuals acting on behalf of a
15 foreign person or foreign interest and that appears to be part
16 of an effort to coerce a civilian population or to create chaos
17 within a society leading to influencing the policy or affecting
18 the conduct of any government by coercion.

1 "Emergency situation or circumstance." Social, economic or
2 biological conditions which threaten the continued operation of
3 government or the health, safety or lives of the residents of
4 this Commonwealth.

5 "Natural disaster." Any hurricane, tornado, storm, flood,
6 high water, earthquake, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, drought,
7 insect infestation, fire, explosion or other natural catastrophe
8 which results in substantial property damage, human suffering
9 and hardship or loss of life.

10 Section 3. Convening of General Assembly postelection.

11 (a) General rule.--The General Assembly shall not meet after
12 the date of the general election in an even-numbered year unless
13 one or more of the conditions in subsection (b) are met.

14 (b) Exceptions.--Following the date of the general election
15 in an even-numbered year, the General Assembly may be called
16 into session only if:

17 (1) the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the
18 House of Representatives in consultation with one another
19 determine jointly that convening the General Assembly is
20 warranted by either an emergency situation or circumstance,
21 an act of terrorism or a natural disaster; or

22 (2) the Governor has called the General Assembly into
23 extraordinary session pursuant to section 12 of Article IV of
24 the Constitution of Pennsylvania.

25 Section 4. Proclamation.

26 (a) Joint legislative proclamation.--Pursuant to section
27 3(b)(1), the President of the Senate in consultation with the
28 Majority Leader of the Senate and the Minority Leader of the
29 Senate and, if possible, the Speaker of the House of
30 Representatives in consultation with the Majority Leader of the

1 House of Representatives and the Minority Leader of the House of
2 Representatives, if possible, shall jointly issue a proclamation
3 identifying the nature of the act of terrorism, emergency
4 situation or circumstance or natural disaster justifying the
5 convening of the General Assembly and designating the subjects
6 of legislation to be considered, which shall be directly related
7 to the identified need for convening the emergency session.

8 (b) Dissemination.--The proclamation issued pursuant to
9 subsection (a) shall be communicated immediately to all members
10 of the General Assembly and, at a minimum, shall be distributed
11 to the news media correspondents located in the Capitol Building
12 and to other members of the news media identified jointly by the
13 Secretary of the Senate and Chief Clerk of the House of
14 Representatives.

15 Section 5. Emergency session.

16 Within 24 hours after issuance of a proclamation pursuant to
17 section 4(a), or within 24 hours after receiving communications
18 from the Governor pursuant to section 12 of Article IV of the
19 Constitution of Pennsylvania, the President of the Senate shall
20 reconvene the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
21 Representatives shall reconvene the House of Representatives.

22 Section 6. General limitation on legislation.

23 When the General Assembly is convened in emergency session
24 pursuant to this act, only legislation which relates directly to
25 legislation designated either in the proclamation of the
26 Governor calling such session or legislation jointly designated
27 by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
28 Representatives calling such session shall be considered.

29 Section 20. Effective date.

30 This act shall take effect immediately.