

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 725 Session of
2012

INTRODUCED BY MIRABITO, EVERETT, FABRIZIO, GEIST, HORNAMAN,
KORTZ, KOTIK, PASHINSKI, PICKETT, READSHAW, MANN AND CONKLIN,
MAY 9, 2012

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, MAY 9, 2012

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the reinstatement of the operation of the Pennsylvania
2 State Police Aviation Patrol Unit IV at the Williamsport
3 Regional Airport.

4 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania State Police Aviation Division was
5 created in November 1968 and patrol operations were first
6 initiated in March 1969 at the Harrisburg-York Airport; and

7 WHEREAS, Over time, 7 Pennsylvania State Police aviation
8 patrol units were developed throughout this Commonwealth, with
9 more than 35 trooper pilots, 3 full-time mechanics, 8
10 helicopters and 6 airplanes; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1978, the Bureau of Patrol implemented an aerial
12 speed enforcement program known as Operation SPARE (State Police
13 Aerial Reconnaissance and Enforcement), which, on average,
14 results in the issuance of one traffic citation for every six
15 minutes of operation; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1983, the Pennsylvania State Police entered into
17 a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of
18 Justice which provides training and operational funding for the

1 Marijuana Identification and Eradication Program, through which
2 aerial searches are conducted which locate marijuana plots for
3 ground troops to monitor or eradicate; and

4 WHEREAS, Airborne thermal imaging systems, also known as
5 forward-looking infrared, are installed on many of the
6 helicopters to provide surveillance of vehicles, people or any
7 other heat-emitting source; and

8 WHEREAS, The aviation patrol units are able to provide law
9 enforcement officers with aerial photographs which can be used
10 in courtroom presentations of accidents or crime scenes; and

11 WHEREAS, Aviation patrol units partake in conducting
12 searches, criminal surveillance, emergency management and
13 homeland security missions, aerial photography and transports
14 while providing assistance in vehicle pursuits, marijuana
15 eradication and any other tasks that may be needed; and

16 WHEREAS, Aviation Patrol Unit IV (Unit IV), also known as the
17 Montoursville Unit, served Lycoming, Northumberland, Union,
18 Snyder, Montour, Clinton, Tioga, Cameron, Potter, Bradford and
19 Sullivan Counties; and

20 WHEREAS, Beginning in 1971, Unit IV provided assistance to
21 Federal, State and local law enforcement that protected 491,000
22 residents within 7,630 square miles; and

23 WHEREAS, Unit IV performed more than 500 operations each year
24 and provided the necessary support services to its assigned
25 patrol area; and

26 WHEREAS, The patrol zone of Unit IV contained a considerable
27 amount of mountainous terrain which could become hazardous to
28 the visitors, sportsmen, campers, hikers and snowmobilers who
29 patronized the area; and

30 WHEREAS, The potentially hazardous conditions in the patrol

1 zone of Unit IV necessitated a number of search missions each
2 year; and

3 WHEREAS, Helicopters from Unit IV have found numerous
4 drowning victims; and

5 WHEREAS, The operation of Unit IV was terminated and
6 responsibilities to patrol its area were transferred to Aviation
7 Patrol Unit II at the Hazleton Municipal Airport; and

8 WHEREAS, The Marcellus Shale natural gas well drilling
9 operations have led to increased vehicle traffic throughout the
10 area; and

11 WHEREAS, Unit IV is needed to patrol the area in order to
12 ensure the safety of residents and drivers on area roadways;
13 therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the
15 Pennsylvania State Police and Governor Tom Corbett to reinstate
16 the operation of the Pennsylvania State Police Aviation Patrol
17 Unit IV at the Williamsport Regional Airport.