

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL**No. 157** Session of
2011

INTRODUCED BY FONTANA, PIPPY, BROWNE, TARTAGLIONE, ERICKSON,
FARNESE, WILLIAMS, WARD, BOSCOLA, COSTA, FERLO, HUGHES,
BREWSTER, WASHINGTON, DINNIMAN, KITCHEN, GREENLEAF, KASUNIC,
STACK, YUDICHAK, EARLL, BLAKE AND SOLOBAY, JANUARY 18, 2011

SENATOR CORMAN, APPROPRIATIONS, RE-REPORTED AS AMENDED, APRIL 2,
2012

AN ACT

1 Establishing a task force within the Department of Education,
2 providing for its powers and duties and providing for
3 administrative support.

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

6 ~~Section 1. Task force on homeless children's education.~~ ←

7 ~~(a) Establishment. There is established within the~~
8 ~~Department of Education a task force on homeless children's~~
9 ~~education.~~

10 ~~(b) Composition. The task force shall be composed of the~~
11 ~~following members:~~

12 ~~(1) The Secretary of Education, who shall act as~~
13 ~~chairperson of the task force.~~

14 ~~(2) The Secretary of Public Welfare or a designee from~~
15 ~~the Office of Children, Youth and Families.~~

16 ~~(3) Fifteen members to be appointed by the Secretary of~~
17 ~~Education, within 30 days of the effective date of this act,~~

1 ~~to include:~~

2 ~~(i) Five representatives of local agencies assisting~~
3 ~~homeless children and families, one each from~~
4 ~~southwestern, northwestern, central, southeastern and~~
5 ~~northeastern Pennsylvania.~~

6 ~~(ii) Four representatives from the Commonwealth's~~
7 ~~public schools, one of which shall be from a charter~~
8 ~~school, representing urban, suburban and rural areas of~~
9 ~~Pennsylvania.~~

10 ~~(iii) Three representatives from Pennsylvania~~
11 ~~intermediate units.~~

12 ~~(iv) Three representatives from Pennsylvania social~~
13 ~~services organizations or advocacy organizations with~~
14 ~~experience working with homeless children and education~~
15 ~~issues.~~

16 ~~(c) Study. The task force shall conduct a study of the~~
17 ~~homeless child population and their educational needs in this~~
18 ~~Commonwealth. The Department of Education shall develop uniform~~
19 ~~forms and surveys necessary for obtaining the information~~
20 ~~required for the study. The study shall include:~~

21 ~~(1) A demographic survey of homeless parents and~~
22 ~~homeless youth that includes, but is not limited to:~~

23 ~~(i) length of homelessness;~~

24 ~~(ii) number of episodes of homelessness;~~

25 ~~(iii) highest educational level attained by homeless~~
26 ~~parents;~~

27 ~~(iv) living situation of homeless students;~~

28 ~~(v) ages and grade levels of homeless students;~~

29 ~~(vi) school attendance rates and gaps in enrollment~~
30 ~~and truancy rates;~~

1 ~~(vii) average number of school changes;~~
2 ~~(viii) access to remedial services;~~
3 ~~(ix) access to after school programs;~~
4 ~~(x) access to and use of Title I funds and all other~~
5 ~~funding sources to support homeless students;~~
6 ~~(xi) drop out rates of homeless students;~~
7 ~~(xii) standardized test scores, including State~~
8 ~~standardized test scores; and~~
9 ~~(xiii) causes and signs of homelessness.~~

10 ~~(2) An assessment of the difficulties in serving~~
11 ~~homeless students.~~

12 ~~(3) An assessment of different school aged students,~~
13 ~~including unaccompanied youth.~~

14 ~~(4) An assessment of barriers to serving the needs of~~
15 ~~preschool children experiencing homelessness, including~~
16 ~~ensuring access to early intervention services.~~

17 ~~(5) An assessment of successful strategies for serving~~
18 ~~homeless students, including strategies for informing~~
19 ~~parents, students and school districts of the educational~~
20 ~~services available to homeless students.~~

21 ~~(6) An assessment of the relationship between homeless~~
22 ~~shelters and school personnel and effective protocols to~~
23 ~~serve homeless students.~~

24 ~~(7) An assessment of best practices used in other states~~
25 ~~to educate homeless students.~~

26 ~~(8) An assessment of methods for the accurate~~
27 ~~identification and counting of homeless students in pre K-~~
28 ~~through twelfth grade, including unaccompanied youth.~~

29 ~~(9) Recommendations regarding data currently collected~~
30 ~~by the department that could be disaggregated on an ongoing~~

1 ~~basis in regard to homelessness of children.~~

2 ~~(d) Report to the General Assembly. The task force shall~~
3 ~~issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the~~
4 ~~Governor, the President pro tempore of the Senate, the Minority~~
5 ~~Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of~~
6 ~~Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of~~
7 ~~Representatives, the chairman and minority chairman of the~~
8 ~~Education Committee of the Senate and the chairman and minority~~
9 ~~chairman of the Education Committee of the House of~~
10 ~~Representatives, and provide periodic updates of this report at~~
11 ~~least once every three years. The initial report shall be~~
12 ~~submitted within one year after the first meeting of the task~~
13 ~~force and distributed to those State and local agencies that~~
14 ~~work with homeless children, as well as to all Pennsylvania~~
15 ~~school districts. Subsequent reports shall be made based on a~~
16 ~~schedule developed by the task force which shall be indicated in~~
17 ~~the initial report.~~

18 ~~(e) Meetings. The task force shall meet at least once each~~
19 ~~quarter and shall hold its first meeting within 60 days of the~~
20 ~~effective date of this act.~~

21 ~~(f) Compensation. Task force members shall receive no~~
22 ~~compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for all~~
23 ~~necessary travel and other reasonable expenses incurred in~~
24 ~~connection with the performance of their duties as members.~~

25 ~~(g) Duties of department. The Department of Education shall~~
26 ~~provide administrative support, office space and any other~~
27 ~~technical assistance required by the task force to carry out its~~
28 ~~duties under this section, including access to all reports and~~
29 ~~data required by the Federal Government to comply with Title I~~
30 ~~of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public~~

1 ~~Law 89-10, 20 U.S.C. Ch. 63, et seq.) and McKinney-Vento~~
2 ~~Homeless Assistance Act of 1986 (Public Law 100-77, 42 U.S.C. S~~
3 ~~11301, et seq.).~~

4 ~~Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.~~

5 SECTION 1. TASK FORCE ON HOMELESS CHILDREN'S EDUCATION. ←

6 (A) ESTABLISHMENT.--THERE IS ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE
7 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION A TASK FORCE ON HOMELESS CHILDREN'S
8 EDUCATION.

9 (B) COMPOSITION.--THE TASK FORCE SHALL BE COMPOSED OF THE
10 FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

11 (1) THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION, WHO SHALL ACT AS
12 CHAIRPERSON OF THE TASK FORCE.

13 (2) THE SECRETARY OF PUBLIC WELFARE OR A DESIGNEE FROM
14 THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES.

15 (3) TWELVE MEMBERS TO BE APPOINTED BY THE SECRETARY OF
16 EDUCATION, WITHIN 30 DAYS OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ACT,
17 TO INCLUDE:

18 (I) FIVE REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL AGENCIES ASSISTING
19 HOMELESS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, ONE EACH FROM
20 SOUTHWESTERN, NORTHWESTERN, CENTRAL, SOUTHEASTERN AND
21 NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA.

22 (II) THREE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE COMMONWEALTH'S
23 PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ONE OF WHICH SHALL BE FROM A CHARTER
24 SCHOOL, REPRESENTING URBAN, SUBURBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF
25 PENNSYLVANIA.

26 (III) TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM PENNSYLVANIA
27 INTERMEDIATE UNITS.

28 (IV) TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM PENNSYLVANIA SOCIAL
29 SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS OR ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS WITH
30 EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH HOMELESS CHILDREN AND EDUCATION

1 ISSUES.

2 (C) STUDY.--THE TASK FORCE SHALL CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE
3 DEMOGRAPHICS AND EDUCATION OF PENNSYLVANIA'S HOMELESS CHILD
4 POPULATION AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS. THE DEPARTMENT OF
5 EDUCATION SHALL DEVELOP UNIFORM FORMS AND SURVEYS NECESSARY FOR
6 OBTAINING THE INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE STUDY. THE STUDY
7 SHALL INCLUDE:

8 (1) A DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF HOMELESS PARENTS AND
9 HOMELESS YOUTH.

10 (2) AN ASSESSMENT OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN PROVIDING
11 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO HOMELESS STUDENTS.

12 (3) AN ASSESSMENT OF BARRIERS TO SERVING THE NEEDS OF
13 PRESCHOOL CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, INCLUDING
14 ACCESS TO EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES.

15 (4) AN ASSESSMENT OF SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR SERVING
16 HOMELESS STUDENTS, INCLUDING STRATEGIES FOR INFORMING
17 PARENTS, HOMELESS SHELTERS, STUDENTS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF
18 THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AVAILABLE TO HOMELESS STUDENTS.

19 (5) AN ASSESSMENT OF BEST PRACTICES USED IN OTHER STATES
20 TO EDUCATE HOMELESS STUDENTS.

21 (6) RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE COLLECTION AND USE OF
22 DATA CURRENTLY COLLECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

23 (D) REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.--THE TASK FORCE SHALL
24 ISSUE A REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
25 GOVERNOR, THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE, THE MINORITY
26 LEADER OF THE SENATE, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
27 REPRESENTATIVES, THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF
28 REPRESENTATIVES, THE CHAIRMAN AND MINORITY CHAIRMAN OF THE
29 EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE AND THE CHAIRMAN AND MINORITY
30 CHAIRMAN OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF

1 REPRESENTATIVES. THE INITIAL REPORT SHALL BE SUBMITTED WITHIN 18
2 MONTHS OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION. THE REPORT SHALL
3 BE DISTRIBUTED TO STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES THAT WORK WITH
4 HOMELESS CHILDREN, AS WELL AS TO ALL PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL
5 DISTRICTS.

6 (E) MEETINGS.--THE TASK FORCE SHALL MEET AT LEAST ONCE EACH
7 QUARTER AND SHALL HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE
8 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION.

9 (F) COMPENSATION.--TASK FORCE MEMBERS SHALL RECEIVE NO
10 COMPENSATION FOR THEIR SERVICES BUT SHALL BE REIMBURSED FOR ALL
11 NECESSARY TRAVEL AND OTHER REASONABLE EXPENSES INCURRED IN
12 CONNECTION WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES AS MEMBERS.

13 (G) DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT.--THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL
14 PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, OFFICE SPACE AND ANY OTHER
15 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRED BY THE TASK FORCE TO CARRY OUT ITS
16 DUTIES UNDER THIS SECTION, INCLUDING ACCESS TO ALL REPORTS AND
17 DATA REQUIRED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO COMPLY WITH TITLE I
18 OF THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 (PUBLIC
19 LAW 89-10, 20 U.S.C. CH. 63, ET SEQ.) AND MCKINNEY-VENTO
20 HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1986 (PUBLIC LAW 100-77, 42 U.S.C. §
21 11301, ET SEQ.).

22 SECTION 2. THIS ACT SHALL TAKE EFFECT IN 60 DAYS.