

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION**No. 147** Session of
2011

INTRODUCED BY SCARNATI, PICCOLA, M. WHITE AND D. WHITE,
JUNE 17, 2011

SENATOR PICCOLA, EDUCATION, AS AMENDED, JUNE 27, 2011

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to
2 examine the Commonwealth's programs for postsecondary
3 education in Commonwealth rural communities and to make
4 recommendations for improving the delivery of open admissions
5 and affordable, high-quality community and technical
6 education in such areas.

7 WHEREAS, The mission of Pennsylvania's community and
8 technical colleges is to increase the work force readiness
9 skills and educational attainment of Pennsylvanians; and

10 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth's community and technical colleges
11 provide an exceptional educational value for more than 220,000
12 Pennsylvanians annually; and

13 WHEREAS, There are large areas of rural Pennsylvania,
14 including an 11-county area in northwestern/central Pennsylvania
15 that is geographically larger than Massachusetts, that have no
16 community colleges; and

17 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth's funding formula for community
18 colleges requires a de facto one-third local share contribution;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, Many rural counties and communities cannot afford

1 the required local share for community college funding; and

2 WHEREAS, The Educational Consortium of the Upper Allegheny
3 (ECUA), a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the
4 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (Public Law 99-514, 26 U.S.C. §
5 501(c)(3)), has established agreements and signed resolutions
6 with 30 school districts and four career and technical centers
7 in 10 of the 11 counties to cooperate in the implementation of
8 regional community college programs and services utilizing
9 existing facilities; and

10 WHEREAS, The ECUA currently works collaboratively with the
11 ~~Community Education Councils~~ COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCILS; and ←

12 WHEREAS, The ECUA has established agreements with Butler
13 County Community College and Harrisburg Area Community College;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, For persons living in rural Pennsylvania, the
16 requirement to drive an hour or more one way, coupled with the
17 cost of gasoline, books and tuition, often can make pursuit of a
18 postsecondary education an out-of-reach goal; and

19 WHEREAS, The medium family income of the 11 counties is
20 \$8,000, or 20%, below the State average and low levels of
21 educational attainment are linked to poverty; and

22 WHEREAS, In the 1960s, when Pennsylvania's community college
23 system was created, it was envisioned as a system of 28
24 community and technical colleges; and

25 WHEREAS, Today, that goal is only at the halfway mark, with
26 14 community colleges founded under the act of August 24, 1963
27 (P.L.1132, No.484), known as the Community College Act of 1963;
28 and

29 WHEREAS, Among the 50 states, this Commonwealth ranks 46th in
30 the number of community colleges per capita; and

1 WHEREAS, States vary widely in their commitment and approach
2 to funding community colleges; and

3 WHEREAS, Many rural areas, both in Pennsylvania and other
4 states, have created innovative and collaborative approaches to
5 providing community college opportunities that do not require
6 the construction of new buildings and facilities; and

7 WHEREAS, While not thoroughly tested in time, the ECUA model
8 is an innovative approach with merit which could service the 11
9 counties and could be a model for other rural regions of this
10 Commonwealth; therefore be it

11 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Legislative Budget and
12 Finance Committee to conduct a study of the need for additional
13 community college educational opportunities in this
14 Commonwealth's rural communities; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the study include at a minimum an analysis of
16 the following:

17 (1) the current system for funding community and
18 technical colleges in Pennsylvania and the impact of that
19 system on this Commonwealth's rural counties and communities;

20 (2) the location of postsecondary educational
21 institutions in Pennsylvania's rural counties;

22 (3) the role of the ECUA in collaboration with ~~Community~~ ←
23 ~~Education Councils~~ COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCILS in supporting ←
24 additional community college educational opportunities for
25 Pennsylvania's rural citizens; and

26 (4) funding approaches used in other states to support
27 community college educational opportunities in rural areas;
28 and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
30 consult with the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania



1 Commission for Community Colleges, the Educational Consortium of
2 the Upper Allegheny, COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCILS and other
3 individuals and organizations as the committee deems
4 appropriate; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
6 provide recommendations necessary or desirable to improve the
7 postsecondary educational opportunities, particularly through
8 community and technical colleges, available to citizens living
9 in this Commonwealth's rural counties; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
11 provide recommendations for the best approach to funding
12 community college programming in rural areas; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
14 analyze the relationship of postsecondary costs to the
15 participation rates of low-income families; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
17 report to the Senate the results of its findings and
18 recommendations by October 31, 2011.