

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 537 Session of  
2013

INTRODUCED BY GRELL, MARSICO, ROZZI, REGAN, VEREB, BLOOM,  
MIRABITO, MILLARD, PICKETT, DAVIS, JAMES, COHEN, READSHAW,  
O'NEILL, BENNINGHOFF, KIRKLAND, SCHLOSSBERG, SONNEY, BISHOP,  
KORTZ, MILNE, GINGRICH, BAKER, EVERETT, MAJOR, YOUNGBLOOD,  
D. COSTA, FLECK, GOODMAN, SCHLEGEL CULVER, STEVENSON,  
BIZZARRO, THOMAS, SABATINA, ROCK AND WATSON, OCTOBER 30, 2013

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, OCTOBER 30, 2013

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing ChildFirst PA for its commitment to training members  
2 of multidisciplinary investigative teams and nationally  
3 recognized child abuse forensic interview training program in  
4 Pennsylvania.

5 WHEREAS, Children bring happiness into our lives and hope to  
6 our future; and

7 WHEREAS, Children are our greatest resource and our most  
8 important responsibility; and

9 WHEREAS, It is our responsibility as parents, friends,  
10 neighbors, citizens and lawmakers to nurture and protect  
11 children, providing an atmosphere of love and respect in which  
12 they are able to grow into healthy, well-adjusted and productive  
13 adults; and

14 WHEREAS, We, as a legislative body, have an ongoing  
15 commitment to protect the rights and needs of children; and

16 WHEREAS, Child abuse crosses all racial, economic and  
17 geographic boundaries and has reached epidemic proportions

across this nation and throughout this Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, There were 26,664 cases of possible child abuse or maltreatment referred for investigation in this Commonwealth in 2012; and

WHEREAS, There were 3,565 substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in this Commonwealth in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of Pennsylvanians in schools, social service agencies, churches and neighborhood groups throughout this Commonwealth are working hard to nurture and support the victims of child abuse and prevent future abuse; and

WHEREAS, In spite of the dedication and sacrifice of these individuals, much more still needs to be done to guarantee a childhood free of abuse and victimization to every child in this Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, As a legislative body, we acknowledge that each county is required by the Child Protective Services Law to form and operate a multidisciplinary investigative team (MDIT); and

WHEREAS, ChildFirst is a nationally recognized forensic interview training program developed by the National Child Protection and Training Center (NCPTC) and Cornerhouse; and

WHEREAS, In July 2009, the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Solicitors Association applied to bring ChildFirst to Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, ChildFirst PA is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Solicitors Association in collaboration with the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association and the Pennsylvania State Police; and

WHEREAS, In March 2011, Pennsylvania became the 17th ChildFirst state; and

WHEREAS, On December 12, 2011, House Resolution 522 of

1 Session 2011 was passed, directing the formation of the  
2 Governor's Task Force on Child Protection to review the current  
3 child abuse-related statutes and to make recommendations on how  
4 to improve the child abuse system; and

5 WHEREAS, On November 27, 2012, the Governor's Task Force on  
6 Child Protection submitted its report of more than 400 pages to  
7 the Governor; and

8 WHEREAS, The Governor's Task Force on Child Protection  
9 acknowledged the need to have well-trained forensic interviewers  
10 who are prepared to interview a child alleged to be a victim of  
11 abuse in an age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate  
12 manner; and

13 WHEREAS, The Governor's Task Force on Child Protection  
14 acknowledges the need for fully trained and functional MDITs in  
15 each county across this Commonwealth; and

16 WHEREAS, ChildFirst PA has trained more than 28 of  
17 Pennsylvania's 67 counties and more than 300 professionals  
18 charged with the responsibility of investigating suspected child  
19 abuse; and

20 WHEREAS, ChildFirst PA is anchored at the Pennsylvania State  
21 Police Academy and training centers across this Commonwealth;  
22 and

23 WHEREAS, The ChildFirst PA motto should be considered at all  
24 times during a child abuse investigation and prosecution:

25 "The Child is our first priority.

26 It is not the needs of the family.

27 Not the child's 'story.'

28 Not the evidence.

29 Not the needs of the courts.

30 Not the needs of the police, Children and Youth

1                   Services or attorneys.

2                   The Child is our priority."

3   ; and

4       WHEREAS, ChildFirst PA is the only nationally recognized  
5 forensic interview and MDIT training program in this  
6 Commonwealth; therefore be it

7       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate  
8 ChildFirst PA as a recognized forensic interview training  
9 program and MDIT; and be it further

10      RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives continue to do  
11 its part in support of the training done by ChildFirst PA; and  
12 be it further

13      RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commend the  
14 Pennsylvania Children and Youth Solicitors Association,  
15 Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, Pennsylvania State  
16 Police, ChildFirst PA and all of its faculty who train the  
17 forensic interviewers and professional members of the  
18 multidisciplinary investigative teams to investigate suspected  
19 child abuse.