

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 1032 Session of 2014

INTRODUCED BY BENNINGHOFF, V. BROWN, CALTAGIRONE, D. COSTA, GINGRICH, GRELL, JAMES, W. KELLER, KILLION, KIM, KORTZ, LONGIETTI, MAHONEY, MARSICO, MURT, PAINTER, PEIFER, PICKETT, READSHAW, ROCK, SAYLOR, SCHLOSSBERG, THOMAS, TOOHIL, WATSON, YOUNGBLOOD, GROVE, COHEN, HARHART AND QUINN, SEPTEMBER 22, 2014

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, OCTOBER 8, 2014

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to study, in
2 consultation with an advisory committee, the issue of truancy
3 and school dropout prevention in this Commonwealth.

4 WHEREAS, Chronic truancy and school dropout rates continue to
5 be critical problems nationally and in this Commonwealth, and
6 educators, parents, community leaders and policymakers at all
7 levels of government have focused attention on the need to
8 address the academic achievement gap and the declining high
9 school graduation rate; and

10 WHEREAS, Students who have unexcused absences from school and
11 become truant are more likely to fail to maintain academic pace
12 with their peers and to be at risk of dropping out of school;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Research indicates that truancy is a barrier to
15 opportunities for future employment success and contributes to
16 involvement in drug use, daytime crime and violence; and

1 WHEREAS, Adopting court performance measures for children in  
2 foster care may provide educational stability and success; and

3 WHEREAS, Current truancy policy and laws may not apply  
4 equally to all public schools, as the enforcement standards  
5 differ for traditional school districts and for charter and  
6 cyber charter schools; and

7 WHEREAS, Current truancy penalties may need further scrutiny  
8 and revision, as penalties and practices may not be effective at  
9 curtailing truancy; and

10 WHEREAS, The current collection of truancy data may be  
11 insufficient; and

12 WHEREAS, Schools, law enforcement, parents and courts may  
13 have insufficient authority to deal with truancy issues; and

14 WHEREAS, Current detention programs for truants may not be  
15 effective; therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint  
17 State Government Commission to do the following:

18 (1) Conduct a comprehensive study of the issues of  
19 truancy and school dropout prevention in this Commonwealth.

20 (2) Establish an advisory committee comprised of  
21 representatives of the Department of Education, educational  
22 organizations, the judiciary, district attorneys, law  
23 enforcement, public organizations involved in truancy issues, <--  
24 REPRESENTATIVES OF COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGENCIES AND  
25 JUVENILE JUSTICE AGENCIES and other organizations selected by  
26 the Joint State Government Commission to consult with the  
27 Joint State Government Commission in conducting the study;  
28 and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the study to be conducted by the Joint State  
30 Government Commission include, but not be limited to, the

1 following:

2 (1) A thorough and comprehensive study of current  
3 truancy laws and policy.

4 (2) Barriers and best practices regarding education  
5 success and stability.

6 (3) Court competencies.

7 (4) Data collection.

8 (5) Measurement of educational outcomes for children in  
9 foster care.

10 (6) Statutes, best practices and legislative initiatives  
11 in other states.

12 (7) Studies or initiatives promoted by national  
13 educational advocacy organizations relating to truancy.

14 (8) ~~Specific enforcement in charter and cyber charter~~ <--  
15 ~~schools be reviewed by charter and cyber charter operatives;~~  
16 THE MANNER IN WHICH CHARTER AND CYBER CHARTER SCHOOLS ENFORCE <--  
17 THE TRUANCY LAWS OF THIS COMMONWEALTH AND IMPEDIMENTS TO  
18 ENFORCEMENT;

19 and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission hold  
21 informational meetings to receive testimony from professionals  
22 or organizations with expertise in truancy and truancy  
23 prevention; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue a  
25 report of its findings and recommendations to the House of  
26 Representatives not later than one year after the date of  
27 adoption of this resolution.