
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 906 Session of
2018

INTRODUCED BY HANNA, SNYDER, READSHAW, MURT, MILLARD, BARRAR,
BARBIN, YOUNGBLOOD, NEILSON, BURNS, DRISCOLL, SCHLOSSBERG,
CALTAGIRONE, JOZWIAK, D. COSTA, McCLINTON, J. McNEILL AND
GOODMAN, MAY 8, 2018

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, MAY 8, 2018

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a
2 study on the safety of staff and corrections officers in
3 State prisons and submit a report of the Joint State
4 Government Commission's findings to the General Assembly.

5 WHEREAS, The Department of Corrections operates 24 State
6 correctional institutions, 14 community correction centers,
7 nearly 40 contract facilities, a motivational boot camp and a
8 training academy; and

9 WHEREAS, The Department of Corrections has a staff of
10 approximately 15,000 employees and oversees nearly 50,000
11 inmates; and

12 WHEREAS, The mission of the Department of Corrections is to
13 reduce criminal behavior by providing individualized treatment
14 and education to offenders and successful community
15 reintegration through accountability and change; and

16 WHEREAS, In order to carry out the mission of the Department
17 of Corrections, it is essential to ensure the safety and
18 security of staff and corrections officers; and

1 WHEREAS, The Secretary of Corrections John E. Wetzel
2 testified during recent budget hearings in the Senate and House
3 of Representatives that violence in correctional institutions
4 has been rising; and

5 WHEREAS, Incidents of assault on staff by inmates occurred a
6 total of 801 times in 2015, which represents an increase of 10%
7 between 2010 and 2015 throughout the correctional system in this
8 Commonwealth; and

9 WHEREAS, The goal of the Department of Corrections'
10 Administrative Segregation and Violence Reduction Initiative is
11 to use restrictive housing to ultimately reduce violence in
12 State prisons; and

13 WHEREAS, There is a need for comprehensive review to
14 determine the best practices and better safety protocols to
15 protect staff and corrections officers; therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
17 State Government Commission to conduct a study on the safety of
18 staff and corrections officers in State prisons and submit a
19 report of the Joint State Government Commission's findings to
20 the General Assembly; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That in conducting the study and submitting a
22 report of the Joint State Government Commission's findings, the
23 Joint State Government Commission have the following duties:

24 (1) Evaluate all standards, practices, regulations and
25 procedures applicable to staffing and the safety of
26 corrections officers.

27 (2) Provide recommendations on standardizing the
28 Restricted Housing Unit system to ensure each incident of
29 violence is handled effectively and uniformly in all
30 correctional institutions.

1 (3) Review the process of prosecuting incidents of
2 assault on staff by inmates, including identifying the total
3 number of the assaults and how many were prosecuted or not
4 prosecuted during the prior year.

5 (4) Evaluate the commissary list to safeguard against
6 dangerous items being provided to inmates, such as metal
7 locks and knitting needles.

8 (5) Provide recommendations for the implementation of a
9 pilot program to use body-imaging search devices on inmates
10 in at least one correctional institution and reviewing the
11 cost and effectiveness of the devices in all correctional
12 institutions.

13 (6) Identify and review the use of segregation control
14 rooms in all correctional institutions, which have the
15 ability to lock cells, control water, power cells and allow
16 corrections officers to speak with inmates via intercom.

17 (7) Provide recommendations and a cost analysis for the
18 implementation of segregation control rooms for correctional
19 institutions that do not utilize segregation control rooms.

20 (8) Provide recommendations for new methods to improve
21 State prison safety for all employees at correctional
22 institutions.

23 (9) Consult with representatives from the public and
24 private sectors within this Commonwealth, including, but not
25 limited to, all of the following:

26 (i) Representatives from the Department of
27 Corrections.

28 (ii) Members of the General Assembly.

29 (iii) Representatives from law enforcement.

30 (iv) The Pennsylvania State Corrections Officers

1 Association.

2 (v) The Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association.

3 (vi) Any other agencies or organizations that the
4 Joint State Government Commission deems relevant to the
5 study;

6 and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission accept
8 and review oral or written comments, documents and other
9 information from persons seeking to provide input regarding the
10 study on the safety of staff and corrections officers in State
11 prisons; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission submit a
13 report of the Joint State Government Commission's findings,
14 along with any statutory or regulatory recommendations, to the
15 General Assembly within one year of the adoption of this
16 resolution.