
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 68 Session of 2019

INTRODUCED BY KENYATTA, MARCH 18, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, MARCH 18, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing poverty as a public health crisis in this
2 Commonwealth that leads to a myriad of individual and
3 societal harms.

4 WHEREAS, Over 1.5 million Pennsylvanians suffer from poverty,
5 while an additional 3.5 million live near the poverty line; and

6 WHEREAS, Of those suffering from poverty, approximately
7 743,000 individuals live in a state of "deep poverty," defined
8 as being at 50% of the poverty line; and

9 WHEREAS, Poverty disproportionately impacts minority
10 communities in this Commonwealth, with 24.8% of the black
11 community and 28.7% of the Latino community living below the
12 poverty line; and

13 WHEREAS, Poverty affects the most vulnerable people in this
14 Commonwealth more than any other; and

15 WHEREAS, Individuals with disabilities are more likely to be
16 poor than the population at large, with more than one in five
17 disabled Pennsylvanians living in poverty; and

18 WHEREAS, Children are more likely to live in poverty than any
19 other group, with 16.7% of children in this Commonwealth living

1 in poverty overall and a staggering one in three black and
2 Latino children living in poverty; and

3 WHEREAS, Poor children are more likely to struggle in school
4 than their more affluent peers and are 7 times as likely to drop
5 out of school; and

6 WHEREAS, Economic data shows that child poverty costs an
7 estimated \$500 billion to the nation's economy every year,
8 reduces productivity by 1.3%, results in heightened crime rates
9 and increases overall health expenditures; and

10 WHEREAS, Approximately 35% of poor children in Philadelphia
11 have experienced emotional or physical neglect while 32% suffer
12 from physical or sexual abuse; and

13 WHEREAS, Individuals living below the poverty line live an
14 average of 6.5 years less than those living above the poverty
15 line; and

16 WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, data shows that individuals living
17 in the poorest parts of the city have life expectancies that are
18 20 years shorter than individuals living in the wealthier parts
19 of the city; and

20 WHEREAS, Poor adults are significantly more likely to suffer
21 from life-threatening illnesses, with individuals living in
22 poverty being twice as likely to have diabetes; and

23 WHEREAS, Roughly 38% of Philadelphia residents living in
24 poverty report experiencing high levels of stress, which
25 correlates with increased rates of asthma, high blood pressure,
26 obesity and mental health related illnesses; and

27 WHEREAS, The level and impact of poverty on citizens of this
28 Commonwealth merits increased attention from the State
29 government and collaborative solutions; and

30 WHEREAS, On January 10, 2018, Governor Tom Wolf issued an

1 emergency proclamation to combat the opioid crisis, which has
2 resulted in increased funding, the opening of new treatment
3 centers and heightened collaboration between State agencies, all
4 aimed at solving the opioid epidemic in our State; and

5 WHEREAS, Lessons learned and strategies employed in combating
6 the opioid epidemic can be applied to other Statewide crises
7 such as poverty; therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize poverty
9 as a public health crisis in this Commonwealth that leads to a
10 myriad of individual and societal harms; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives, in recognizing
12 this public health crises, acknowledge that increased
13 collaboration among various facets of government at the State,
14 county and local level, such as the collaboration that has been
15 implemented to fight the opioid crises, is necessary to
16 adequately combat poverty.