
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 52 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY HUGHES, FONTANA, KEARNEY, SCHWANK, COMITTA AND
HAYWOOD, MARCH 19, 2021

REFERRED TO LAW AND JUSTICE, MARCH 19, 2021

A RESOLUTION

1 Establishing a task force on law enforcement policies and
2 procedures used in response to large-scale demonstrations,
3 protests and other acts of civil disobedience.

4 WHEREAS, The United States is currently engaged in a national
5 debate on law enforcement policies and practices; and

6 WHEREAS, High-profile incidents of use of force by law
7 enforcement have led to numerous demonstrations and protests in
8 recent months; and

9 WHEREAS, Several of these demonstrations and protests have
10 turned violent; and

11 WHEREAS, These violent demonstrations and protests have
12 resulted in millions of dollars in property damage, numerous
13 arrests, physical injuries and, in some cases, death; and

14 WHEREAS, Law enforcement responses to large-scale but
15 otherwise peaceful acts of civil disobedience have the potential
16 to escalate already charged atmospheres; and

17 WHEREAS, The people of this Commonwealth have a
18 constitutional right to assemble peacefully; and

1 WHEREAS, Law enforcement has a duty and responsibility to
2 protect the general public from acts of violence, including
3 riots and militant protests; and

4 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth has an obligation to assist law
5 enforcement in developing best practices to ensure that large-
6 scale demonstrations do not become violent; therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That the Senate establish a task force on law
8 enforcement policies and procedures for responding to large-
9 scale demonstrations; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the task force be comprised of the following
11 members:

12 (1) Two members of the Senate, one appointed by the
13 President pro tempore of the Senate and one appointed by the
14 Minority Leader of the Senate.

15 (2) The Chairman of the Pennsylvania Emergency
16 Management Council.

17 (3) The Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police.

18 (4) The Attorney General of the Commonwealth.

19 (5) The Adjutant General of the Commonwealth.

20 (6) The mayor of a city of the first class, or his or
21 her designee.

22 (7) The mayor of a city of the second class, or his or
23 her designee.

24 (8) The Police Commissioner of a city of the first
25 class, or his or her designee.

26 (9) The Chief of Police of a city of the second class,
27 or his or her designee; and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the task force be comprised of 10 members
29 appointed by the Governor as follows:

30 (1) One member representing the Pennsylvania League of

1 Cities.

2 (2) One member representing The County Commissioners
3 Association of Pennsylvania.

4 (3) Two incumbent mayors of a city of the third class.

5 (4) One incumbent chief of police the police department
6 of a city of third class.

7 (5) One chief of police of a university or campus police
8 department.

9 (6) One current or former Federal law enforcement
10 officer with experience in handling protests and other forms
11 of civil disobedience.

12 (7) One current or former member of the United States
13 Department of Justice Civil Rights Division with experience
14 in investigating, litigating or prosecuting claims of civil
15 rights violations.

16 (8) Two attorneys or legal educators specializing in the
17 field of civil rights or constitutional law; and be it
18 further

19 RESOLVED, That the task force direct the Joint State
20 Government Commission to establish an advisory committee
21 consisting of the following members:

22 (1) Two individuals representing the Pennsylvania
23 Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of
24 Colored People to be selected by the Joint State Government
25 Commission, upon the recommendation of the governing body of
26 the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association for the
27 Advancement of Colored People.

28 (2) Two individuals representing the Pennsylvania
29 Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union to be selected
30 by the Joint State Government Commission, upon the

1 recommendation of the governing body of the Pennsylvania
2 Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

3 (3) Two individuals representing Pennsylvania Chapters
4 of the National Lawyers Guild to be selected by the Joint
5 State Government Commission, upon the recommendation of the
6 governing body of the National Lawyers Guild.

7 (4) One individual representing the Pennsylvania
8 District Attorneys Association to be selected by the Joint
9 State Government Commission, upon the recommendation of the
10 governing body of the Pennsylvania District Attorneys
11 Association.

12 (5) One individual representing the Pennsylvania State
13 Troopers Association to be selected by the Joint State
14 Government Commission, upon the recommendation of the
15 governing body of the Pennsylvania State Troopers
16 Association.

17 (6) One individual representing the Pennsylvania Chiefs
18 of Police Association to be selected by the Joint State
19 Government Commission, upon the recommendation of the
20 governing body of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police
21 Association.

22 (7) One individual representing the Pennsylvania
23 Sheriffs' Association to be selected by the Joint State
24 Government Commission, upon the recommendation of the
25 governing body of the Pennsylvania Sheriffs' Association; and
26 be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the Chairman of the Pennsylvania Emergency
28 Management Council serve as chairperson of the advisory
29 committee; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission, working

1 with the task force and the advisory committee, conduct a
2 thorough and comprehensive study of existing State and local law
3 enforcement policies and procedures for responding to acts of
4 civil disobedience, including training and response programs,
5 crowd control tactics, the use of less-than-lethal force, the
6 issues set forth in this resolution and other related issues as
7 determined by the Joint State Government Commission; and be it
8 further

9 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission, working
10 with the task force and the advisory committee, review the
11 following to identify the best law enforcement practices for
12 responding to acts of civil disobedience and the causes of
13 escalation from peaceful demonstration to violent protest and
14 develop recommendations best suited for law enforcement agencies
15 in this Commonwealth:

16 (1) Proposals and policies of other states.

17 (2) Policies currently in place at law enforcement
18 agencies in this Commonwealth and other states.

19 (3) Other resources on the issues of civil disobedience
20 and law enforcement practices; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission
22 establish a process by which interested members of the public
23 can make suggestions and offer input to the task force; and be
24 it further

25 RESOLVED, That the task force recommend changes to State law,
26 practices, policies and procedures relating to law enforcement
27 responses to acts of civil disobedience that are necessary to
28 ensure the rights and safety of demonstrators, law enforcement
29 and the general public; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue a

- 1 report of the task force's findings and recommendations to the
- 2 Senate within 12 months of the adoption of this resolution.