
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 207 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY KANE, KEARNEY, HUGHES, FONTANA, COLLETT,
BARTOLOTTA, SANTARSIERO, BREWSTER, SCAVELLO, FLYNN, COMMITTA,
SCHWANK, MASTRIANO AND COSTA, NOVEMBER 8, 2021

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, NOVEMBER 8, 2021

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of November 2021 as "Good Samaritan Law
2 Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The year 2020 was an especially challenging and
4 dangerous year for those with substance use disorders; and

5 WHEREAS, On August 31, 2021, "Opioid Overdose Awareness Day"
6 was celebrated on the front steps of the Pennsylvania State
7 Capitol; and

8 WHEREAS, This year, "Opioid Overdose Awareness Day" took on
9 new significance because in 2020 there was a 30% increase in
10 drug overdose deaths nationwide according to the Centers for
11 Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and

12 WHEREAS, The CDC reported 5,172 drug overdose deaths in
13 Pennsylvania last year, an increase of 16% from 4,444 drug
14 overdose deaths in 2019; and

15 WHEREAS, A portion of these tragic deaths could be prevented
16 by utilizing Act 139 of 2014, which provides immunity to
17 individuals reporting an incident of drug overdose; and

1 WHEREAS, The provisions of this act were passed with
2 bipartisan and unanimous support by the General Assembly; and

3 WHEREAS, This act ensures that Pennsylvanians facing medical
4 emergencies are able to receive necessary medical attention; and

5 WHEREAS, In March 2021, the Government Accountability Office
6 (GAO) released a review of good Samaritan laws throughout the
7 country; and

8 WHEREAS, The study found that 47 states and the District of
9 Columbia have enacted good Samaritan laws; and

10 WHEREAS, The GAO reviewed 17 studies that provide insights
11 into the effectiveness of good Samaritan laws; and

12 WHEREAS, The GAO found a pattern of lower rates of opioid-
13 related overdose deaths among states that have enacted good
14 Samaritan laws, both compared to death rates prior to a law's
15 enactment and death rates in states without such laws; and

16 WHEREAS, When comparing death rates prior to enactment of a
17 good Samaritan law and death rates in states without these laws,
18 the GAO found a pattern of lower rates of opioid-related
19 overdose deaths among states that have enacted good Samaritan
20 laws; and

21 WHEREAS, The GAO review found an increased likelihood of
22 individuals calling 911 if they are aware of these laws; and

23 WHEREAS, The GAO analysis found that public awareness of good
24 Samaritan laws vary substantially across jurisdictions among law
25 enforcement officers and the public, which could affect an
26 individual's willingness to call for emergency assistance; and

27 WHEREAS, Act 139 of 2014 only works if everyone knows about
28 its existence; and

29 WHEREAS, If individuals know that they will not face charges
30 after reporting a drug overdose, they are more likely to seek

1 the urgent attention that is necessary in emergency situations;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, In many drug overdose cases, even a few minutes can
4 save a life; and

5 WHEREAS, Promoting the provisions of Act 139 of 2014 and
6 raising awareness among residents of Pennsylvania can help save
7 lives and reduce drug overdose deaths; therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That the Senate designate the month of November
9 2021 as "Good Samaritan Law Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania;
10 and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That all executive, legislative and judicial
12 branches of State and local government be encouraged to raise
13 awareness and promote the benefits of the good Samaritan laws in
14 Pennsylvania.