

---

---

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

---

# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 66 Session of  
2023

---

INTRODUCED BY SMITH-WADE-EL, MADDEN, KINSEY, BURGOS, SANCHEZ,  
KAZEEM, HOWARD, STURLA, BELLMON, BOROWSKI, HILL-EVANS,  
PARKER, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, KHAN, WAXMAN, INNAMORATO, OTTEN,  
KRAJEWSKI, BULLOCK AND MAYES, APRIL 10, 2023

---

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
APRIL 10, 2023

---

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to  
2 conduct a study and issue a report on the impact of housing  
3 on health in this Commonwealth.

4 WHEREAS, Housing quality includes the physical condition of a  
5 home, adequate and appropriate utility service, the  
6 characteristics of the area in which a home is located and a  
7 home's affordability; and

8 WHEREAS, Housing is considered affordable when it costs less  
9 than 30% of a family's income; and

10 WHEREAS, Nearly 1.5 million Pennsylvania households spend  
11 more than 30% of their income on housing; and

12 WHEREAS, Nearly 29% of children in this Commonwealth live in  
13 cost-burdened households; and

14 WHEREAS, An individual who identifies as an ethnic minority  
15 is more likely to live in unaffordable housing, which means the  
16 individual is also more likely to face associated health  
17 challenges; and

1       WHEREAS, The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia reports a  
2 Statewide shortage of 253,981 rental homes that are both  
3 affordable and available to people at or below 30% of median  
4 family income, often leading to homelessness; and

5       WHEREAS, People experiencing homelessness are more likely to  
6 have health problems than those who are well-housed; and

7       WHEREAS, Inadequate nutrition and medical care are associated  
8 with the lack of access to affordable housing; and

9       WHEREAS, Residents of highly impoverished, unsafe  
10 neighborhoods have an increased likelihood of adverse physical  
11 and mental health effects; and

12       WHEREAS, Substandard housing propagates infectious diseases  
13 through contaminated water, poor waste disposal systems and  
14 unsanitary conditions; and

15       WHEREAS, Substandard housing increases the risk of burns and  
16 other injuries from exposed or unconventional heating sources,  
17 unguarded windows and sills, broken glass, obsolete fixtures and  
18 other hazards; and

19       WHEREAS, Children and senior citizens are particularly  
20 vulnerable to the health effects of substandard housing; and

21       WHEREAS, More than 1,300 elderly Pennsylvanians have died  
22 from accidental falls in unsafe houses; and

23       WHEREAS, Dampness, unfiltered air, poor ventilation, a lack  
24 of heat and unclean or unsafe flooring contribute to respiratory  
25 and pulmonary conditions, including asthma; and

26       WHEREAS, Homes that are poorly weatherized or lack adequate  
27 utility service can contribute to ill health; and

28       WHEREAS, Statewide, 40% of the houses tested for radon have  
29 high levels of the carcinogenic gas; and

30       WHEREAS, Older houses are a source of childhood lead exposure

1 and lead poisoning; and

2 WHEREAS, Because Pennsylvania has the second largest number  
3 of pre-1950 houses in the nation, lead remains a health hazard  
4 in our communities; and

5 WHEREAS, A growing number of agencies and organizations  
6 support research showing the direct effects of housing quality  
7 on health; and

8 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Housing and Urban  
9 Development, the Pennsylvania Safe and Healthy Homes Program,  
10 the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Commission to Build a  
11 Healthier America, the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, the  
12 Center for Housing Policy, the Urban Institute, the Brookings  
13 Institute and the Healthy Rowhouse Project are among these  
14 entities; and

15 WHEREAS, Health care plans and providers in several states,  
16 including Texas, Arizona and Pennsylvania, are working to  
17 improve health care outcomes through housing; and

18 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has begun to explore solutions through  
19 the Department of Community and Economic Development's  
20 Neighborhood Assistance Program; and

21 WHEREAS, The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center,  
22 Allegheny Health Network and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
23 are developing initiatives integrating housing and health; and

24 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and  
25 Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund provides significant aid to  
26 households below 50% of median income and has made substantial  
27 contributions to improving the housing stock and health of  
28 thousands of Pennsylvanians; and

29 WHEREAS, Current State-specific data is required to better  
30 provide for housing and health benefits in this Commonwealth;

1 therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the  
3 Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study and  
4 issue a report on the impact of housing on health in this  
5 Commonwealth; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the study include background information and  
7 data relating to housing conditions, including access to utility  
8 service, and health effects described in this resolution, a  
9 review of health-related housing initiatives across the nation  
10 and any other information or data deemed necessary or  
11 appropriate; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the study include an analysis of the cost of  
13 health expenditures related to unmet housing needs, including  
14 Medicaid, Medicare and unreimbursed care provided by hospitals;  
15 and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the study include an analysis of the health  
17 care cost savings achievable through addressing unmet housing  
18 needs; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the study include an analysis of the efficacy  
20 of particular interventions to address unmet housing needs,  
21 improve health outcomes and reduce health care expenditures; and  
22 be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the study include an analysis of disaggregated  
24 sociodemographic data related to health and housing; and be it  
25 further

26 RESOLVED, That the analyzed disaggregated sociodemographic  
27 data be made publicly available on Open Data Pennsylvania; and  
28 be it further

29 RESOLVED, That, in conducting the study, the committee  
30 consult other departments, agencies, organizations, entities or

1 persons as necessary or appropriate; and be it further

2       RESOLVED, That the committee solicit input from other  
3 departments, agencies, organizations, entities or persons on  
4 barriers to, and best practices for, collecting demographic  
5 data; and be it further

6       RESOLVED, That the committee issue a report of its findings  
7 and recommendations to the House of Representatives within one  
8 year of the adoption of this resolution; and be it further

9       RESOLVED, That the committee's report of its findings and  
10 recommendations include policy changes that the collected  
11 demographic data indicates are necessary to reduce disparities.