

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, MAYES, FREEMAN AND GREEN, APRIL 10, 2023

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, JUNE 13, 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~~ ACCORDING TO THE UNITED STATES INTERAGENCY <--
9 COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS, HOUSING is considered affordable when
10 it costs less than 30% of a family's income; and

11 WHEREAS, ~~Nearly~~ THE UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU REPORTED IN <--
12 THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY THAT NEARLY 1.5 million
13 Pennsylvania households spend more than 30% of their income on
14 housing; and

15 WHEREAS, Nearly 29% of children in this Commonwealth live in
16 cost-burdened households ACCORDING TO A 2022 SURVEY BY THE <--
17 UNITED WAY OF PENNSYLVANIA; and

1 WHEREAS, An individual who identifies as an ethnic minority
2 is more likely to live in unaffordable housing, which means the
3 individual is also more likely to face associated health
4 challenges; and

5 WHEREAS, ACCORDING TO HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INTERNATIONAL'S <--
6 2020 STUDY, HISTORIC DISCRIMINATION IN UNITED STATES HOUSING
7 POLICY, PARTICULARLY DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BLACK AMERICANS, IS
8 ONE OF THE CHIEF DRIVERS OF RACIAL INEQUITIES THAT PERSIST
9 TODAY; AND

10 WHEREAS, The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia reports a
11 Statewide shortage of 253,981 rental homes that are both
12 affordable and available to people at or below 30% of median
13 family income, ~~often leading to homelessness~~; and <--

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

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

18 WHEREAS, Residents of highly impoverished, unsafe
19 neighborhoods have an increased likelihood of adverse physical
20 and mental health effects; and

21 WHEREAS, Substandard housing propagates infectious diseases
22 through contaminated water, poor waste disposal systems and
23 unsanitary conditions; and

24 WHEREAS, Substandard housing increases the risk of burns and
25 other injuries from exposed or unconventional heating sources,
26 unguarded windows and sills, broken glass, obsolete fixtures and
27 other hazards; and

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

30 WHEREAS, More than 1,300 elderly Pennsylvanians have died

1 from accidental falls in unsafe houses; and

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

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

7 WHEREAS, Statewide, 40% of the houses tested for radon have
8 high levels of the carcinogenic gas ACCORDING TO THE DEPARTMENT <--
9 OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION; and

10 WHEREAS, Older houses are a source of childhood lead exposure
11 and lead poisoning; and

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

15 WHEREAS, A growing number of agencies and organizations
16 support research showing the direct effects of housing quality
17 on health; and

18 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Housing and Urban
19 Development, the Pennsylvania Safe and Healthy Homes Program,
20 the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Commission to Build a
21 Healthier America, the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, the
22 Center for Housing Policy, the Urban Institute, the Brookings
23 Institute and the Healthy Rowhouse Project ~~are among these~~ <--
24 ~~entities~~ SUPPORT RESEARCH ON HOUSING QUALITY AND HEALTH; and <--

25 WHEREAS, Health care plans and providers in several states,
26 including Texas, Arizona and Pennsylvania, are working to
27 improve health care outcomes through housing; and

28 ~~WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has begun to explore solutions through~~ <--
29 ~~the Department of Community and Economic Development's~~
30 ~~Neighborhood Assistance Program; and~~

1 ~~WHEREAS, The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center,~~
2 ~~Allegheny Health Network and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia~~
3 ~~are developing initiatives integrating housing and health; and~~

4 ~~WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and~~
5 ~~Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund provides significant aid to~~
6 ~~households below 50% of median income and has made substantial~~
7 ~~contributions to improving the housing stock and health of~~
8 ~~thousands of Pennsylvanians; and~~

9 WHEREAS, Current State-specific data is required to better
10 provide for housing and health benefits in this Commonwealth;
11 therefore be it

12 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the
13 Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study and
14 issue a report on the impact of housing on health in this
15 Commonwealth; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the study include background information and
17 data relating to housing conditions, including access to utility
18 service, and health effects described in this resolution, a
19 review of health-related housing initiatives across the nation
20 and any other information or data deemed necessary or
21 appropriate; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the study include an analysis of ~~the cost of~~ <--
23 WHETHER THERE ARE MEDICAID health expenditures related to unmet <--
24 housing needs, ~~including Medicaid, Medicare and unreimbursed~~ <--
25 ~~care provided by hospitals;~~ and be it further

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

29 RESOLVED, That the study include an analysis of the efficacy
30 of particular interventions to address unmet housing needs,

1 improve health outcomes and reduce health care expenditures; and
2 be it further

3 ~~RESOLVED, That the study include an analysis of disaggregated~~ <--
4 ~~sociodemographic data related to health and housing; and be it~~
5 ~~further~~

6 ~~RESOLVED, That the analyzed disaggregated sociodemographic~~
7 ~~data be made publicly available on Open Data Pennsylvania; and~~
8 ~~be it further~~

9 RESOLVED, That, in conducting the study, the committee
10 consult other departments, agencies, organizations, entities or
11 persons as necessary or appropriate; and be it further

12 ~~RESOLVED, That the committee solicit input from other~~ <--
13 ~~departments, agencies, organizations, entities or persons on~~
14 ~~barriers to, and best practices for, collecting demographic~~
15 ~~data; and be it further~~

16 RESOLVED, That the committee issue a report of its findings
17 and recommendations to the House of Representatives within one
18 year of the adoption of this resolution.; ~~and be it further~~ <--

19 ~~RESOLVED, That the committee's report of its findings and~~
20 ~~recommendations include policy changes that the collected~~
21 ~~demographic data indicates are necessary to reduce disparities.~~