

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 15 Session of 2021

INTRODUCED BY OWLETT, HENNESSEY, CAUSER, IRVIN, SCHLOSSBERG, HILL-EVANS, CIRESI, JAMES AND PASHINSKI, JANUARY 14, 2021

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, JUNE 7, 2021

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a
2 thorough and comprehensive analysis of the current school bus
3 driver industry and provide recommendations as to how the
4 Commonwealth can effectively address the shortage of school
5 bus drivers.

6 WHEREAS, Every day school bus drivers are tasked with the
7 responsibility of transporting our Commonwealth's most precious
8 cargo - our children - to and from school; and

9 WHEREAS, It is common practice for a state to ensure that an
10 individual who operates a school bus to transport school
11 children has been suitably vetted and screened; and

12 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth and the Federal Government have
13 created laws and regulations requiring that school bus operators
14 successfully pass knowledge and driving tests, demonstrating
15 their capability to safely operate a loaded school bus; and

16 WHEREAS, While these laws and regulations serve as safeguards
17 to assure the safe transport of school children, the rigorous
18 qualifications they impose have created greater barriers to
19 entry into the industry; and

1 WHEREAS, Across this Commonwealth, school districts and
2 school bus companies have been struggling to hire and retain an
3 adequate number of qualified school bus drivers; and

4 WHEREAS, At times the shortage of qualified school bus
5 drivers has resulted in school districts attempting to borrow
6 school bus drivers from neighboring school districts and
7 ultimately having no choice but to cancel an entire school day;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Statistics of the Department of Transportation
10 substantiate that the number of licensed school bus drivers in
11 this Commonwealth has been on a decline, while the number of
12 students needing daily school bus transportation has continued
13 to increase; therefore be it

14 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint
15 State Government Commission to conduct a holistic study
16 utilizing quantitative and qualitative data analyses to better
17 comprehend the scope of this Commonwealth's current shortage of
18 properly licensed school bus drivers; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, THAT THE STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE JOINT STATE <--
20 GOVERNMENT COMMISSION UTILIZE, AT A MINIMUM, INTERMEDIATE UNIT
21 BOUNDARIES TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE GEOGRAPHIC IMPLICATIONS OF
22 THIS COMMONWEALTH'S CURRENT SHORTAGE OF PROPERLY LICENSED SCHOOL
23 BUS DRIVERS; AND BE IT FURTHER

24 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission provide
25 recommendations as to how the Commonwealth can effectively
26 address the shortage of school bus drivers and increase the
27 number of qualified school bus drivers to meet the needs of the
28 children in this Commonwealth who depend on school bus
29 transportation on a daily basis; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the recommendations be consistent with the

1 Federal Government's minimum qualifications for the licensing of
2 school bus drivers; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission
4 establish an advisory committee composed, at a minimum, of the
5 following:

6 ~~(1) Representatives of the Department of Education.~~ <--

7 ~~(2) Representatives of the Department of Transportation.~~

8 ~~(3) Representatives of the Pennsylvania School Bus~~
9 ~~Association;~~

10 (1) THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION OR A DESIGNEE. <--

11 (2) THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION OR A DESIGNEE.

12 (3) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL BUS
13 ASSOCIATION.

14 (4) A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL BOARDS
15 ASSOCIATION;

16 and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue a
18 report with its findings and recommendations within 12 months of
19 the passage of this resolution to the Education and
20 Transportation Committees of the House of Representatives.