
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 73 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY SIMS, N. NELSON, KENYATTA, SANCHEZ, McNEILL,
SCHLOSSBERG, BURGOS, SCHWEYER, LEE, KINKEAD AND HOHENSTEIN,
MARCH 11, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, MARCH 11, 2021

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Department of Health to prioritize the vaccination of
2 corrections staff and incarcerated people since they are at
3 increased risk for contracting and dying from COVID-19.

4 WHEREAS, Incarcerated people have suffered high rates of
5 COVID-19 infection because of the nature of close confinement
6 with others and some serious failings of the enactment of health
7 and safety guidelines; and

8 WHEREAS, The mortality rate of COVID-19 for incarcerated
9 people in Federal and state correctional facilities is four
10 times as high as the mortality rate for the general population;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Over the course of the pandemic, more than 12,000
13 inmates in Pennsylvania have tested positive for COVID-19 and 76
14 have died; and

15 WHEREAS, Over half of the inmates at the State Correctional
16 Institute Laurel Highlands, which serves as a long-term care
17 facility for many older inmates or inmates with medical
18 conditions, have tested positive for COVID-19 and at least eight

1 people have died; and

2 WHEREAS, Corrections staff are put at increased risk for
3 contracting and dying from COVID-19 because of their exposure to
4 increased rates of COVID-19 at prisons and other correctional
5 facilities; and

6 WHEREAS, Outbreaks in prisons that infect corrections staff
7 can spread to the surrounding community; and

8 WHEREAS, Given that many correctional institutions in
9 Pennsylvania are located in rural areas, outbreaks that start at
10 correctional institutions and spread to the surrounding
11 community through corrections staff can strain the capabilities
12 and resources of rural hospitals that have a limited capacity
13 because of the high number of existing COVID-19 cases; and

14 WHEREAS, While several thousand people have been released
15 from correctional institutions to slow the spread of COVID-19 in
16 correctional institutions in Pennsylvania, this effort was not
17 sufficient to stop the virus and it continues to spread rapidly;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, As of January 11, 2021, there are 2,163 active
20 COVID-19 cases among inmates in Pennsylvania and 251 cases among
21 staff; and

22 WHEREAS, The development and emergency use authorizations of
23 COVID-19 vaccines is an important milestone, and the needs of
24 incarcerated people cannot be forgotten; therefore be it

25 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the
26 Department of Health to prioritize the vaccination of
27 corrections staff and incarcerated people since they are at
28 increased risk for contracting and dying from COVID-19.