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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 20 Session of  
2023

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INTRODUCED BY HUGHES, SCHWANK, FONTANA, COSTA AND KEARNEY,  
JANUARY 31, 2023

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REFERRED TO LAW AND JUSTICE, JANUARY 31, 2023

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A RESOLUTION

1 Establishing a task force on law enforcement policies and  
2 procedures used in response to large-scale demonstrations,  
3 protests and other acts of civil disobedience.

4 WHEREAS, The United States is currently engaged in a national  
5 debate on law enforcement policies and practices; and

6 WHEREAS, High-profile incidents of use of force by law  
7 enforcement have led to numerous demonstrations and protests in  
8 recent months; and

9 WHEREAS, Several of these demonstrations and protests have  
10 turned violent; and

11 WHEREAS, These violent demonstrations and protests have  
12 resulted in millions of dollars in property damage, numerous  
13 arrests, physical injuries and, in some cases, death; and

14 WHEREAS, Law enforcement responses to large-scale but  
15 otherwise peaceful acts of civil disobedience have the potential  
16 to escalate already charged atmospheres; and

17 WHEREAS, The people of this Commonwealth have a  
18 constitutional right to assemble peacefully; and

1       WHEREAS, Law enforcement has a duty and responsibility to  
2 protect the general public from acts of violence, including  
3 riots and militant protests; and

4       WHEREAS, The Commonwealth has an obligation to assist law  
5 enforcement in developing best practices to ensure that large-  
6 scale demonstrations do not become violent; therefore be it

7       RESOLVED, That the Senate establish a task force on law  
8 enforcement policies and procedures for responding to large-  
9 scale demonstrations; and be it further

10       RESOLVED, That the task force be comprised of the following  
11 members:

12           (1) Two members of the Senate, one appointed by the  
13 President pro tempore of the Senate and one appointed by the  
14 Minority Leader of the Senate.

15           (2) The Chairman of the Pennsylvania Emergency  
16 Management Council, or a designee.

17           (3) The Commissioner of Pennsylvania State Police, or a  
18 designee.

19           (4) The Attorney General of the Commonwealth, or a  
20 designee.

21           (5) The Adjutant General of the Commonwealth, or a  
22 designee.

23           (6) The Superintendent of the Pennsylvania Capitol  
24 Police Department, or a designee.

25           (7) The mayor of a city of the first class, or a  
26 designee.

27           (8) The mayor of a city of the second class, or a  
28 designee.

29           (9) The Police Commissioner of a city of the first  
30 class, or a designee.

1           (10) The Chief of Police of a city of the second class,  
2           or a designee;

3 and be it further

4           RESOLVED, That the task force be comprised of 10 members  
5 appointed by the Governor as follows:

6           (1) One member representing the Pennsylvania League of  
7           Cities.

8           (2) One member representing The County Commissioners  
9           Association of Pennsylvania.

10          (3) Two incumbent mayors of a city of the third class.

11          (4) One incumbent chief of police of the police  
12          department of a city of the third class.

13          (5) One chief of police of a university or campus police  
14          department.

15          (6) One current or former Federal law enforcement  
16          officer with experience in handling protests and other forms  
17          of civil disobedience.

18          (7) One current or former member of the United States  
19          Department of Justice Civil Rights Division with experience  
20          in investigating, litigating or prosecuting claims of civil  
21          rights violations.

22          (8) Two attorneys or legal educators specializing in the  
23          field of civil rights or constitutional law;

24 and be it further

25          RESOLVED, That the task force direct the Joint State  
26          Government Commission to establish an advisory committee  
27          consisting of the following members:

28          (1) Two individuals representing the Pennsylvania  
29          Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of  
30          Colored People to be selected by the Joint State Government

1 Commission, upon the recommendation of the governing body of  
2 the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association for the  
3 Advancement of Colored People.

4 (2) Two individuals representing the Pennsylvania  
5 Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union to be selected  
6 by the Joint State Government Commission, upon the  
7 recommendation of the governing body of the Pennsylvania  
8 Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

9 (3) Two individuals representing Pennsylvania Chapters  
10 of the National Lawyers Guild to be selected by the Joint  
11 State Government Commission, upon the recommendation of the  
12 governing body of the National Lawyers Guild.

13 (4) One individual representing the Pennsylvania  
14 District Attorneys Association to be selected by the Joint  
15 State Government Commission, upon the recommendation of the  
16 governing body of the Pennsylvania District Attorneys  
17 Association.

18 (5) One individual representing the Pennsylvania State  
19 Troopers Association to be selected by the Joint State  
20 Government Commission, upon the recommendation of the  
21 governing body of the Pennsylvania State Troopers  
22 Association.

23 (6) One individual representing the Pennsylvania Chiefs  
24 of Police Association to be selected by the Joint State  
25 Government Commission, upon the recommendation of the  
26 governing body of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police  
27 Association.

28 (7) One individual representing the Pennsylvania  
29 Sheriffs' Association to be selected by the Joint State  
30 Government Commission, upon the recommendation of the

1 governing body of the Pennsylvania Sheriffs' Association;  
2 and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That the Chairman of the Pennsylvania Emergency  
4 Management Council serve as chairperson of the advisory  
5 committee; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission, working  
7 with the task force and the advisory committee, conduct a  
8 thorough and comprehensive study of existing State and local law  
9 enforcement policies and procedures for responding to acts of  
10 civil disobedience, including training and response programs,  
11 crowd control tactics, the use of less-than-lethal force, the  
12 issues set forth in this resolution and other related issues as  
13 determined by the Joint State Government Commission; and be it  
14 further

15 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission, working  
16 with the task force and the advisory committee, review the  
17 following to identify the best law enforcement practices for  
18 responding to acts of civil disobedience and the causes of  
19 escalation from peaceful demonstration to violent protest and  
20 develop recommendations best suited for law enforcement agencies  
21 in this Commonwealth:

22 (1) Proposals and policies of other states.

23 (2) Policies currently in place at law enforcement  
24 agencies in this Commonwealth and other states.

25 (3) Other resources on the issues of civil disobedience  
26 and law enforcement practices;

27 and be it further

28 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission  
29 establish a process by which interested members of the public  
30 can make suggestions and offer input to the task force; and be

1 it further

2 RESOLVED, That the task force recommend changes to State law,  
3 practices, policies and procedures relating to law enforcement  
4 responses to acts of civil disobedience that are necessary to  
5 ensure the rights and safety of demonstrators, law enforcement  
6 and the general public; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission issue a  
8 report of the task force's findings and recommendations to the  
9 Senate within 12 months of the adoption of this resolution.