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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 171 Session of  
2022

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INTRODUCED BY STEPHENS, HILL-EVANS, BURGOS, BOBACK, SCHLOSSBERG  
AND CIRESI, FEBRUARY 3, 2022

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, FEBRUARY 3, 2022

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A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Governor, Senate, Judiciary and interested  
2 stakeholders through the State, counties and local  
3 governments to join with the House of Representatives to form  
4 a "Justice Reinvestment Initiative III" Working Group in  
5 Pennsylvania.

6 WHEREAS, The General Assembly recently enacted two pieces of  
7 criminal justice legislation focused on targeted system  
8 improvements designed to reduce recidivism while lowering costs  
9 to taxpayers and enhancing compensation to crime victims; and

10 WHEREAS, Together, these reforms are expected to save \$48  
11 million in State corrections spending by 2023; and

12 WHEREAS, These policy changes were the result of our  
13 Commonwealth's ongoing participation in the Justice Reinvestment  
14 Initiative (JRI); and

15 WHEREAS, JRI is a data-driven approach meant to improve  
16 public safety, examine corrections and related criminal justice  
17 spending, manage and allocate criminal justice populations in a  
18 more cost-effective manner, and to reinvest savings in  
19 strategies that can hold offenders accountable, decrease crime,

1 and strengthen neighborhoods; and

2 WHEREAS, JRI operates as a public-private partnership between  
3 participating states, the United States Department of Justice  
4 Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Council of State Governments  
5 (CSG) Justice Center and The Pew Charitable Trusts; and

6 WHEREAS, States participating in JRI receive intensive  
7 technical assistance to analyze the factors driving correctional  
8 populations and costs-information that helps each state identify  
9 its own set of customized solutions to reduce recidivism and  
10 improve return on investment; and

11 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania launched its first effort at criminal  
12 justice reform using a JRI approach in 2012 when the  
13 Pennsylvania Justice Reinvestment Working Group, which included  
14 officials from all three branches of State government, counties  
15 and localities, as well as stakeholders in the criminal justice  
16 field-worked to review Pennsylvania data and develop policy  
17 options to improve our communities; and

18 WHEREAS, The final report of the JRI I Task Force was adopted  
19 in May 2012 and targeted four main areas for improvement,  
20 including: training and equipment for law enforcement; expanding  
21 local resources to counties that maximize probation and other  
22 options instead of state prison, including alternative  
23 sentences, improving efficiencies in the parole process and  
24 increasing accountability of and improving the use of community  
25 correction centers in Pennsylvania; and

26 WHEREAS, Act 122 of 2012 and Act 196 of 2012 subsequently  
27 were enacted to implement these recommendations and redirect  
28 savings to be reinvested in supporting victims' services, local  
29 law enforcement, county probation and parole and other programs  
30 and services; and

1       WHEREAS, In 2015, the Commonwealth embarked on a second round  
2 of JRI to build on prior efforts and address new challenges  
3 related to costs, supervision and recidivism; and

4       WHEREAS, A JRI II working group soon convened, again  
5 partnering with CSG Justice Center staff, to analyze  
6 Pennsylvania's criminal justice data and develop strategies  
7 based on that data with an overarching goal of developing and  
8 implementing policies and programs to avert the growth of the  
9 Commonwealth's prison population while investing in county  
10 probation supervision, victim compensation and evidence-based  
11 programs shown to reduce recidivism rates; and

12       WHEREAS, In December 2019, JRI II culminated in the enactment  
13 of Acts 114 and 115 of 2019, which address the high cost of  
14 incarceration in the state, strengthen support for county  
15 probation programs, fix inadequate sentencing guidelines and  
16 reform the post-trial criminal justice system to ensure work  
17 towards rehabilitation of individuals and preparation to reenter  
18 society, rather than creating further risks for recidivism; and

19       WHEREAS, Despite the successes of JRI I and JRI II in  
20 Pennsylvania, there are still more areas of the criminal justice  
21 system that were identified in those initiatives for bipartisan,  
22 data-driven improvement; and

23       WHEREAS, Notably, JRI II included a recommendation that the  
24 state form a multi-branch task force dedicated to review  
25 pretrial practices; and

26       WHEREAS, This recommendation acknowledged that accelerating  
27 and improving pretrial practices could simultaneously reduce  
28 county jail populations held pretrial, thus reducing county  
29 costs, while enhancing public safety by quickly connecting  
30 arrestees with programming that can address underlying

1 criminogenic behavior; and

2 WHEREAS, There is further work that can be done to improve  
3 Pennsylvania's criminal justice system to enhance public safety  
4 and improve outcomes for those who are drawn into the system;  
5 therefore be it

6 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urges the  
7 Governor, the Senate, the Judiciary and interested stakeholders  
8 throughout State, county and local governments to join with the  
9 House of Representatives to form a "Justice Reinvestment  
10 Initiative III" Working Group in Pennsylvania; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That this JRI III Working Group shall be dedicated  
12 to analyzing and recommending concrete policy options to improve  
13 pretrial criminal practices to reduce recidivism, lower costs to  
14 taxpayers and enhance public safety.