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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 230 Session of  
2023

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INTRODUCED BY WEBSTER, PROBST, HANBIDGE, SCHLOSSBERG, KHAN,  
MADDEN, MALAGARI, HILL-EVANS, SANCHEZ, GALLAGHER, HOWARD,  
BOROWSKI AND KRAJEWSKI, OCTOBER 2, 2023

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
OCTOBER 2, 2023

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A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a  
2 study on the cost and effectiveness of current and ongoing  
3 Housing First programs across the United States and the  
4 potential effectiveness of Housing First programs in this  
5 Commonwealth.

6 WHEREAS, Housing First is a program focusing on providing  
7 housing to the unhoused, regardless of background, including  
8 typical barriers like substance use disorder status; and

9 WHEREAS, Housing First programs operate under the belief that  
10 housing is an essential first step in recovering from being  
11 unhoused; and

12 WHEREAS, Utilizing Housing First programs may be most useful  
13 for individuals who are chronically unhoused; and

14 WHEREAS, The risk of being unhoused increases for an  
15 individual with a low socioeconomic status, a mental health  
16 disorder or a substance use disorder; and

17 WHEREAS, On any given day, more than 15,000 residents of this  
18 Commonwealth can be unhoused; and

1       WHEREAS, On average, this Commonwealth has 11 unhoused  
2 individuals for every 100,000 of the general population; and

3       WHEREAS, Veterans are more likely than the general population  
4 to be unhoused due to a higher risk for traumatic brain injury  
5 or post-traumatic stress disorder; and

6       WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Education for Children and Youth  
7 Experiencing Homelessness Program, which reduces barriers for  
8 unhoused children to access local public schools, served 40,003  
9 children; and

10       WHEREAS, This Commonwealth has 16 Continuum of Care districts  
11 that receive Federal grants to serve the unhoused and other  
12 populations; and

13       WHEREAS, Across the United States, there are six cities and  
14 states that have implemented Housing First programs; and

15       WHEREAS, Since the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, several cities  
16 across the country have struggled with providing services to  
17 unhoused population and have declared states of emergency to  
18 cope with this crisis; and

19       WHEREAS, The Biden Administration seeks to reduce the  
20 unhoused population by 25% by 2025 using Housing First  
21 principles; therefore be it

22       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint  
23 State Government Commission to conduct a study on the cost and  
24 effectiveness of current and ongoing Housing First programs  
25 across the United States and the potential effectiveness of  
26 Housing First programs in this Commonwealth; and be it further

27       RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission compile  
28 a report on the study that, at a minimum, includes the  
29 following:

30           (1) An assessment of the state of the unhoused

1 population in this Commonwealth, including the state of the  
2 most at-risk individuals and the individuals who are  
3 currently experiencing chronic homelessness.

4 (2) Whether Housing First programs in other locations  
5 across the United States, including California, Salt Lake  
6 City, Utah and New Orleans, Louisiana, have reduced the  
7 chronically unhoused population and the broader unhoused  
8 population.

9 (3) Whether the United States Department of Veterans  
10 Affairs' Housing First approach, which supports unhoused  
11 veterans and their families in finding permanent housing, has  
12 reduced the population of unhoused veterans in this  
13 Commonwealth.

14 (4) The cost difference between Housing First programs  
15 and traditional shelter-based programs.

16 (5) The effect of recent events, including the 2020  
17 COVID-19 pandemic, increases in the cost of living and the  
18 reduction of funding for the Supplemental Nutrition  
19 Assistance Program, on the unhoused population.

20 (6) The effect of children being unhoused on academic  
21 performance in schools.

22 (7) Any other matter regarding the unhoused and Housing  
23 First programs that the Joint State Government Commission  
24 deems appropriate;

25 and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission be  
27 authorized to request information that is not protected from  
28 disclosure from State agencies and departments for the study;  
29 and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission submit

1 the report with its findings and recommendations no later than  
2 18 months after the adoption of this resolution to all of the  
3 following:

- 4 (1) The President pro tempore of the Senate.
- 5 (2) The Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- 6 (3) The Majority Leader of the Senate.
- 7 (4) The Minority Leader of the Senate.
- 8 (5) The Majority Leader of the House of Representatives.
- 9 (6) The Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.