

The Joint State Government Commission

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Rep. Florindo Fabrizio, Chairman · Sen. John Rafferty, Vice Chairman
David John, Executive Director

Joint State Journal

A Monthly Publication

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Director's Desk:

We are pleased to present this first edition of the Joint State Journal. This monthly publication will keep you apprised of current projects of the Joint State Government Commission as well as recent and upcoming publications. The Journal will also highlight one study each month and provide background information about the subject.

The Joint State Government Commission was established through Act 459 of 1937 and has served as a nonpartisan research agency of the General Assembly for more than 70 years. Commission reports have served as the basis for numerous stat-

utes enacted over the years on a host of different issues. Commission reports also provide House and Senate members with in-depth research and policy recommendations on key public policy issues.

The Joint State Government Commission has an experienced staff of attorneys, research analysts and an economist working tirelessly to serve the public policy research needs of the General Assembly.

The commission presently has 19 active projects, including five which are on-going and continue to produce new research and proposed statutory amendments. Five other projects are staff studies in

which the authorizing resolution has directed the Commission to perform the research in-house. Most of our projects involved the work of advisory committees of experts who provide direction to the staff in the compilation of a final report.

I encourage you to visit the Joint State Government Commission website to learn more about the agency and to read our past reports and publications. The website is listed above.

Thank you for reading this edition of the Journal. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me.

David John
Executive Director

Research Update:

In September, staff members of the Joint State Government Committee attended a public hearing regarding HR 350 hosted by Rep. Siptroth. A report of preliminary findings was presented by staff economist Karen Maynard. As project manager, Karen has conducted major surveys throughout Pennsylvania and has collected data that will result in a thorough report answering the questions posed in the resolution. Examples of those questions include:

1. How many Common Interest Ownership Communities (CIOC) are there in PA?
 2. How many CIOCs are there in each municipality?
 3. What is the amount and age of the current infrastructure within these communities?
 4. Are there opportunities for the Commonwealth to assist local governments and CIOCs to deliver services at an affordable cost?
 5. What is the impact of allowing CIOCs to access State funds for infrastructure improvements?
- The final report will be published by March 3, 2011.





Commonwealth Concerns



There is a new beast on the horizon facing Pennsylvania's criminal justice and human rights professionals. Federal law defines it as the "recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of involuntary servitude, peonage, or debt bondage slavery." The practice is known as human trafficking.

Human trafficking is becoming acknowledged as modern day slavery. It exists in every country of the world and is the third largest criminal industry globally, outnumbered only by the illegal arms and drug trades. The US State Department estimates that there are about 560,000

women and children trafficked over international borders every year. Most of the victims are kidnapped from third world countries and transported over diplomatic boundaries where they are forced to perform various services for money. It is estimated that 70 percent of those services are of a sexual nature.

In the last ten years, this disturbing industry has leached its way into the United States, prompting President Bush to sign the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. Little is known about the number of victims trafficked within the United States, but the State Department does estimate that about 17,500 women and children are smuggled into the country every year. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth has not been ex-

empt from the brutality of human trafficking. There have been cases of human trafficking in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and York. One incident, discovered in York County in 2009, involved a nail salon where two Vietnamese women were forced to work; one of the victims was even forced to marry her captor, the owner of the nail salon.

These crimes have not gone unnoticed by Pennsylvania legislators. In April, SR 253 (sponsored by Senator Greenleaf) was adopted which directed the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a study on human trafficking in the Commonwealth. A study is underway and the report due by April 20th, 2012. The project manager for this report will be Commission Research Analyst, Mr. Ted Herman.

Current Projects:

19 Active Projects which include:

- Human Trafficking SR 253
- Philadelphia Criminal Justice System SR 344
- Alternative Dispute Resolution SR 160
- Effects on Children of Incarcerated Parents HR 203

Recent Publications:

- The Probate, Estates and Fiduciaries Code: Proposed Amendments to Title 20 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes. June 2010.

Notable Past Publications:

- State-Local Highway Financing (1947)
- Livestock Marketing in Pennsylvania (1955)
- Public School Building Costs (1970)

If you would like a copy, please contact the Commission or log onto our website.

Tasks Forces and Advisory Committees at the Joint State Government Commission

Task force studies are initiated by resolutions adopted by both the House and Senate.

- The resolution determines the topic area of study.
- The task force generally consists of eight members, four from each chamber and four from each party.
- An advisory committee of experts is often appointed to aid the task force.
- Some resolutions may also appoint an advisory committee without requiring a supervising taskforce.

Task force and advisory committee members reach consensus and report recommendations including legislation to the General Assembly.

Resolutions may also direct the Commission to perform staff studies which are produced in-house by Commission staff.

Upcoming Publications

- Public School Performance SR-243
- Library Code SR-343
- Common Interest Ownership Communities HR-350
- Effects on Children of Incarcerated Parents HR-203/SR-51

