

No. 1984-133

AN ACT

HB 1698

Creating a task force on rural issues; providing powers and duties for the task force; and establishing a sunset date.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Rural Issues Task Force Act.

Section 2. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this act shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Task force.” The Task Force on Rural Issues created by section 3.

Section 3. Task force.

(a) Creation.—The Task Force on Rural Issues is created within the Office of the Governor as an advisory board.

(b) Membership.—The task force shall consist of 12 members. Six members shall be appointed by the Governor. Three members shall be appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate, two members shall be from the majority party and one member shall be from the minority party. Three members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, two members shall be from the majority party and one member shall be from the minority party.

(c) Terms.—The term of a member of the task force shall run from the date of appointment until 30 days after the convening of the General Assembly in an odd-numbered year and until a successor is appointed and qualified. Except for initial appointments, which shall take effect immediately, appointments to the task force shall take effect 31 days after the convening of the General Assembly. A vacancy in the membership shall be filled by the appointing power making the original appointment for the unexpired term.

(d) Organization.—The initial task force shall organize as soon as possible after the effective date of this act at the call of the Governor by electing from its members a chairman, vice chairman and secretary. Thereafter, the task force shall reorganize 31 days after the convening of each regular session of the General Assembly in an odd-numbered year.

Section 4. Powers and duties.

The powers and duties of the task force shall be to:

- (1) Serve as a repository of data about rural issues and problems.
- (2) Conduct research and encourage research by colleges and universities, other governmental units and private organizations.

(3) Identify and make recommendations concerning rural problems which are of an interagency or intergovernmental nature including, but not limited to, agricultural, educational, medical, social, transportation, environmental, economic and land use, that affect the economy and people of rural areas.

(4) Identify areas of need in rural regions and identify the resources of various Federal, State and local agencies to address these needs.

(5) Develop recommendations on ways to improve governmental services in rural Pennsylvania, including drafting legislation when changes in law are recommended.

(6) Conduct public hearings to solicit testimony from public and private agencies, citizens and representatives of local government on the status of rural services in this Commonwealth.

(7) Provide the Governor and the General Assembly with an annual report on the findings, recommendations and accomplishments of the task force.

(8) Enter into contracts and make grants in the execution of its powers and duties.

Section 5. Sunset.

The task force shall terminate all activities and shall go out of existence December 31, 1987, unless otherwise reestablished by the General Assembly pursuant to the provisions of the act of December 22, 1981 (P.L.508, No.142), known as the Sunset Act.

Section 6. Transfer.

Amounts appropriated to the Interdepartmental Rural Affairs Task Force by the act of July 21, 1983 (P.L.603, No.7A), known as the Supplemental General Appropriation Act for Fiscal Year 1983-1984, shall be deemed an appropriation to the task force established by this act. All personnel, allocations, equipment, files, records, contracts, agreements, obligations and other materials which are used, employed or expended in connection with the powers, duties or functions of the Interdepartmental Rural Affairs Task Force are hereby transferred to the task force established by this act with the same force and effect as if the appropriations had been made to and said items had been the property of the task force in the first instance and if said contracts, agreements and obligations had been incurred or entered into by said task force.

Section 7. Effective date.

This act shall take effect immediately.

APPROVED—The 6th day of July, A. D. 1984.

DICK THORNBURGH