

IMPACCT Commission

House Resolution 2 – Signed March 9, 1995

- House Resolution 2 introduced during the 1995-96 legislative session was a concurrent resolution that created the Improve Management and Cost Control Task Force (IMPACCT) Commission to study the management of state government operations and made recommendations regarding cost-cutting measures. It was signed by the governor on March 9, 1995.
- The commission was made up of leaders from the public and private sectors and was charged to study Commonwealth government operations and the experience of other states in an effort to propose changes which will reduce costs, increase accountability and improve service.
- The resolution called for the commission to propose recommendations to cut costs, increase efficiency, increase effectiveness, consolidate like functions, return function and job creation opportunities to the private sector and eliminate redundancy.
- The commission was comprised of 17 members – four appointed by the governor, with at least three being from the general public; 12 appointed by the General Assembly – 3 each from the Senate majority and minority leaders, and the House majority and minority leaders; one non-government official or employee to serve as chairman, who was appointed by the governor.

The commission was required by HR2 to report its findings and recommendations to the governor and the General Assembly by Nov. 30, 1995, which was extended to Feb 1996. The report was presented on February 29, 1996 with 450 recommendations to change the operation of state government.

PRIME

Executive Order signed April 19, 1996

- On April 19, 1996, Gov. Tom Ridge signed Executive Order 1996-2, which created the Privatize Retain Innovate Modify and Eliminate (PRIME) Council to coordinate the implementation of as many of the recommendations contained in the IMPACCT Commission's final report.
- The purpose of the council was to coordinate the re-engineering of state government in order to make government operations more efficient and less costly.
- The PRIME Council offered advice and assistance in prioritizing the recommendations of the IMPACCT study; provided assistance in the review of agency action plans and the implementation of specific Commonwealth re-engineering initiatives; assisted in the further review of areas of state government, which were not reviewed by the IMPACCT Commission.
- The 13 member PRIME council consisted of the Lt. Governor, who served as chairman, and other appointees chosen by the governor. The executive order required all agencies under the governor's jurisdiction to fully cooperate and provide staff assistance and information as needed by PRIME to carry out its duties. State agencies were directed to establish internal innovation teams, which were responsible for implementing re-engineering efforts.
- The Council was staffed with an employee of the Office of the Lt. Governor and Office of Administration. Support was received from the Office of the Budget, Governor's Policy Office and the Office of General Counsel.

Over a 7 year period there were savings of over \$581 million dollars throughout the agencies.

PRIME Examples

Here are some examples of how state government has changed positively to provide services to our citizens.

Focusing on the Customer

- Department of Transportation End of Course Skills testing - In 1996 a change was made by the Department of Transportation in the area of licensing new, young drivers by implementing an End-of-course skills test. This program allows driver education teachers to administer road skills tests directly to their students (rather than having each new driver go to a DOT skills testing facility). Tests are taken after students complete 30 hours of theory and 6 hours of 'behind-the-wheel' instruction. Over 5,000 young drivers have been licensed this way so far.
- Taxpayer Service and Information Center - This center combines state-of-the-art technology with old-fashioned personal attention. The center located in the Department of Revenue has answered over 200,000 calls in ten months. By consolidating all taxpayer services, the department has been able to cross-train the customer service representatives in 27 different taxes. Customers can receive answers on the first call without the need to call back or to be transferred multiple times.
- Parks Reservation System - The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources instituted a new customer-focused, visitor-friendly telephone reservation system for Pennsylvania's 116 state parks. The new toll-free number 1-888-PA-PARKS is available Monday through Saturday 7 am to 5 p.m. The customer service representatives have access to a database linking all state parks and can easily make a reservation for a caller anywhere in Pennsylvania. In the past, visitors would be forced to call each park individually to check for the availability of campsites and to learn about special activities.

Making Pennsylvania More Competitive

- Single Application Form - The Department of Community and Economic Development oversees more than 40 financial assistance programs for businesses and communities. Previously, a separate application was required to apply for any of these programs. Now, with the implementation of the Single Application for Assistance, only one application is required - greatly streamlining the process and making financial assistance available faster than ever before.
- The Next Generation Farmer Loan Program - The program assists beginning and first-time farmers to purchase land, farm equipment, farm buildings, and livestock. This innovative program uses federal tax-exempt mortgage financing to reduce a farmer's interest rate for capital purchases. The program's objective is to help ensure that Pennsylvania's rich agricultural traditions are handed down to the next generation.

Reducing Regulation and Inspection

➤ Pump and Tank Inspections - Until recently, inspection of certain types underground storage tanks and pumps, was the sole responsibility of State Police Fire Marshals. Creative thinking led to the transferring of this duty to the Department of Labor and Industry whose inspectors were already on the same sites. Now, over 18,000 personnel hours per year have been freed up allowing the State Police additional resources to conduct arson investigations.

Advancing through Technology

➤ Campaign Finance Reporting - Have you ever questioned how a political campaign in Pennsylvania is funded? Now, this question can be answered with the successful launch of the Department of State's campaign finance initiative. Anyone with access to the Internet can access campaign finance reports 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This information can be viewed at the following address: www.dos.state.pa.us/campaign.htm

➤ Providing Disaster Relief - Recently, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency put into action a system to provide disaster relief payments to communities directly through an electronic transfer. Now, payments are transferred directly to a local government within minutes. Previously, a paper check with its week's worth of processing was the only method available to get funds to communities for rebuilding and restoring services.

Simplifying Financial Management

➤ Telefile System - The Department of Revenue's new system allows individual taxpayers to file their state taxes over the telephone. Once entirely form and paper-based, the new process allows tax revenues and refunds to be processed faster than ever before. Now, a taxpayer, due a refund, receives it within 13 working days instead of the 6 to 8 weeks it previously had taken. Over a quarter of a million Pennsylvanians have taken advantage of this service since its inception.

Enhancing our Transportation System

➤ Expanding On-Line Messenger Service - Many Pennsylvanians are taking advantage of PennDOT's On-Line Messenger Service. Created to get back driver and vehicle registrations, this system allows transactions that would normally require a messenger to drive to Harrisburg to drop off forms that normally would take weeks to process. Now, these transactions can take place via computer and require only minutes to be accomplished. The system has been expanded to 79 locations throughout Pennsylvania.

Improving Health Care Delivery & Social Services

➤ Providing Key Health Care Contacts via the Internet - The Department of Health has compiled a listing of various health-related contacts and toll-free numbers and has posted them via their Internet web page. The list includes key contacts for medical, general health, nutrition,

and related services. This provides a one-stop center for customers to access and eliminates the need to make multiple phone calls to retrieve the needed health care information.

Agencies Working Together

➤ Community Work Program - This program uses low-security inmates to trim brush, paint buildings, and plant trees among other items. The program was originally a pilot project between the Departments of Corrections and Conservation and Natural Resources. Now, this program has been expanded to include providing assistance to the Departments of Military and Veteran's Affairs and the Department of Transportation.

➤ Inmate/Welfare Cross-Match – In a cooperative effort, the departments of Corrections and Public Welfare (DPW) worked to eliminate welfare benefits collected by inmates (totaling \$246,863 monthly) in violation of state law. A computerized match was completed of state prison inmates and individuals receiving cash assistance, medical assistance and food stamps benefits from DPW. When the data was compiled, it was found that with 1,503 reviews completed, 765 individuals, or 51 percent were found ineligible for benefits. By terminating the 765 open DPW cases, there was an annual savings to the Commonwealth of \$2,962,356.