A RESOLUTION-

1 Urging the State Board of Education with the Department of
2 Education to conduct a study of the Commonwealth's public
3 school library services for students in kindergarten through
4 grade 12, measuring and comparing access to print and
5 electronic resources, professional support and instruction in
6 the use of information and research among this Commonwealth's
7 public school entities and evaluating how funding and
8 resources are allocated for school library services in
9 relation to student and community circumstances.-

10 WHEREAS, Up-to-date school libraries include printed-
11 materials, computers and technology, video and audio materials,-
12 research tools and professional instruction and support for-
13 students; and-
14 WHEREAS, Effective school libraries include a variety of-
15 instructional and educational programs designed to meet the-
16 needs of all students, including gifted students, students with-
17 disabilities, English as a second language students, students in-
18 poverty and students from different racial and cultural-
19 backgrounds; and-
20 WHEREAS, Students and teachers need high-quality school-
21 library services and related educational resources in order to-
WHEREAS, In a study of this Commonwealth's school libraries conducted in 1999-2000, a significant correlation between Pennsylvania System of School Assessment reading test scores of students and schools with quality school library programs and staffing proved the impact of school libraries on improved student achievement; and-

WHEREAS, Similar studies in 19 other states conducted over the past 16 years have supported the findings of this Commonwealth's study and demonstrated the role that school libraries play in student learning; and-

WHEREAS, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has identified information, media and technology skills necessary "to ensure that students emerge from our schools with the skills needed to be effective citizens, workers and leaders in the 21st century"; and-

WHEREAS, Not all of this Commonwealth's students attend a public school that has a school library, and this is particularly true in impoverished rural and urban communities with larger numbers of at-risk children; and-

WHEREAS, Access to and instruction by a certified school librarian is also nonexistent in many schools or limited in school districts where librarians serve in multiple buildings, thus reducing hours the school library is open and available to students and teachers; and-
WHEREAS, This Commonwealth does not have any requirements for public schools to operate a school library or to have certified staffing, although the Public School Code does require school libraries and staffing for private schools; and-

WHEREAS, This Commonwealth does not provide or require dedicated funding for school library services, such as New York, which provides $6.25 per student for school library resources and, therefore, this Commonwealth is at a disadvantage compared to neighboring states, a disadvantage which results in school library resources and school library conditions that vary widely across this Commonwealth; therefore be it-

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the Department of Education be urged to conduct a study of public school library resources and services in this Commonwealth for students in kindergarten through grade 12, measuring and comparing funding, facilities, access to print and electronic resources, professional support and programming and instruction in the use of information and research among this Commonwealth's public schools and districts and evaluating how these elements are allocated in relation to student and community circumstances, such as poverty, disability, race and English language ability; and be it further-

RESOLVED, That, in addition, the study is urged to include an analysis of the following for this Commonwealth, measured and quantified, when possible, per student, per school, per district and Statewide:-

(1) The number of public schools without a centralized school library collection in the building under the administration of a certified school librarian assigned full-time to that building.
The ratio of certified school librarians to students.

The assignment of other support staffs to work in school libraries, the number of such other staffs and their qualifications.

The number of hours that students have access to the school library in their building per day.

The amount of up-to-date and useful print and electronic resources to which students and teachers have access through school library services.

The average age and condition of books and technology in school libraries.

The amount of funding from all sources being spent annually over the past ten years for school library resources and services.

The availability of up-to-date, functional, Internet-connected computers for student use in school libraries.

The kinds of other library services and programs provided by school libraries to support students and teachers.

Additional aspects of school libraries related to the overall purpose of this study; and be it further RESOLVED, That the Commonwealth libraries provide available support for this study as requested by the State Board of Education with the Department of Education; and be it further RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the Department of Education be urged to request the assistance of the following organizations in conducting this study: the

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Education Committee of the Senate, the Education Committee of the House of Representatives, the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association, the Pennsylvania State Education Association and the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers; and be it further-

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the Department of Education be urged to provide recommendations necessary or desirable to improve and update public school library resources, services and facilities for all students in this Commonwealth, including recommendations for appropriate levels of resources, staffing and hours of access; and be it further-

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the Department of Education be urged to provide recommendations necessary or desirable to provide all students with the school library resources, facilities, programs and instruction to enable them to become successful readers, learners, researchers and consumers and producers of information; and be it further-

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the Department of Education be urged to provide recommendations necessary or desirable to address school library inequities or insufficiencies affecting disadvantaged students and communities; and be it further-

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the Department of Education be urged to conduct at least three public roundtables to receive input about a draft of the study and its recommendations; and be it further-

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education with the Department of Education be urged to report to the House of Representatives the result of its study and recommendations regarding the status of this Commonwealth's school libraries and
1 student access to them and file the report with the Chief Clerk
2 of the House of Representatives no later than June 30, 2011.