
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2654 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY MURT, KINSEY, FREEMAN, ROZZI, READSHAW, HILL-EVANS
AND DONATUCCI, JULY 1, 2020

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, JULY 1, 2020

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the
2 Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in organization and
3 jurisdiction of courts of common pleas, providing for
4 authorizing trauma-informed courts.

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

7 Section 1. Title 42 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated
8 Statutes is amended by adding a section to read:

9 § 918. Trauma-informed courts.

10 (a) Establishment.--The court of common pleas of a judicial
11 district may establish, from available funds, a trauma-informed
12 court which shall have jurisdiction as provided under subsection
13 (e). The court may adopt local rules for the administration of
14 trauma-informed courts and their related services. The local
15 rules may not be inconsistent with this section or any rules
16 established by the Supreme Court.

17 (b) Purpose.--The purpose of a trauma-informed court is to
18 have judges presiding who recognize defendants appearing in a
19 criminal proceeding have personally experienced acts of violence

1 or other traumatic life events. The court may allow for greater
2 flexibility in sentencing, provide intensive judicial
3 supervision, mandatory drug testing and incentives to help
4 offenders with substance abuse problems.

5 (c) Statewide trauma-informed courts coordinator.--To the
6 extent that funds are available, the Supreme Court may appoint a
7 Statewide trauma-informed courts coordinator who may be assigned
8 other responsibilities by the Supreme Court. The coordinator
9 may:

10 (1) Encourage and assist in the establishment of trauma-
11 informed courts in each judicial district where the caseload
12 justifies the establishment of such courts.

13 (2) Identify sources of funding for trauma-informed
14 courts and their related services, including the availability
15 of grants.

16 (3) Provide coordination and technical assistance for
17 grant applications.

18 (4) Develop model guidelines for the administration of
19 trauma-informed courts and their related services.

20 (5) Establish procedures for monitoring trauma-informed
21 courts and their related services and for evaluating the
22 effectiveness of trauma-informed courts and their related
23 services.

24 (d) Advisory committee.--The Supreme Court may establish,
25 from available funds, an interdisciplinary and interbranch
26 advisory committee to advise and assist the Statewide trauma-
27 informed courts coordinator in monitoring and administering
28 trauma-informed courts Statewide.

29 (e) Jurisdiction of trauma-informed courts.--In a court of
30 common pleas that has established a trauma-informed court under

1 this section, the court may have exclusive jurisdiction over
2 criminal actions in which the defendant:

3 (1) has a prior offense; and

4 (2) is able to demonstrate with documentation that the
5 defendant suffers from sexual abuse, domestic violence, a
6 past act of violence or traumatic life event.

7 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.