
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2

Session of
1985

INTRODUCED BY IRVIS AND RYAN, JANUARY 23, 1985

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, JANUARY 23, 1985

AN ACT

1 To provide for the establishment of a Commonwealth Commission on
2 the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution; and
3 making an appropriation.

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

6 Section 1. Findings.

7 The General Assembly finds that:

8 (1) The Bicentennial of the Constitutional Convention's
9 adoption of the Constitution at the Pennsylvania State House,
10 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, occurs on September 17, 1987; the
11 Bicentennial of the Pennsylvania ratification of the
12 Constitution occurs on December 12, 1987; and the
13 Bicentennial of the national adoption of the Constitution, by
14 ratification of states, occurs on June 21, 1988.

15 (2) The anniversary dates of the national ratification
16 of the United States Constitution's Thirteenth, Fourteenth,
17 Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments abolishing slavery,
18 preventing abridgment of citizenship rights, guaranteeing

1 equal rights for all, regardless of race, color or previous
2 condition of servitude, and the granting of suffrage to women
3 should be appropriately observed during the Bicentennial of
4 the United States Constitution.

5 (3) The Constitution enunciates the limitations on
6 government, the inalienable citizen rights and the timeless
7 principles of individual liberty and responsibility and
8 equality before law, for the people of the United States of
9 America.

10 (4) This document has set an enduring example of
11 representative democracy for the world.

12 (5) The maintenance of the common principles that
13 animate and govern our Republic depend upon a knowledge and
14 understanding of their roots and origins.

15 (6) The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, since its birth,
16 attended by William Penn's prayer that it would become the
17 "seed of a Nation," earned, through peace and war, the role
18 of gracious and learned host for the Constitutional
19 Convention of 1787.

20 (7) Pennsylvania's people, communities and Commonwealth
21 government provided America with debate, study,
22 experimentation, leadership and strength indispensable to the
23 formation of the Republic in the process of the convention
24 adoption of the Constitution on September 17, 1787, the
25 issuance of a State House call for a convention to consider
26 ratification and the Commonwealth ratification of the United
27 States Constitution on December 12, 1787; and

28 (8) It is the privilege and duty of every Pennsylvanian
29 to join in a Commonwealth and national observance of the
30 Bicentennial of the United States Constitution with pride,

1 dedication and love of heritage.

2 Section 2. Commission; membership.

3 (a) Establishment of commission.--There is hereby
4 established the Commonwealth Commission on the Bicentennial of
5 the United States Constitution, hereinafter referred to as the
6 commission, to promote and coordinate activities to commemorate
7 the Bicentennial of the Constitution.

8 (b) Composition.--The commission shall be composed of 30
9 members as follows:

10 (1) Twenty members appointed by the Governor; four of
11 whom shall be appointed from among the recommendations made
12 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, in
13 consultation with the Majority and Minority Leaders of the
14 House of Representatives; four of whom shall be appointed
15 from among the recommendations made by the President pro
16 tempore of the Senate, in consultation with the Majority
17 Leader and Minority Leader of the Senate; and four of whom
18 shall be appointed from recommendations by the Chief Justice
19 of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, in consultation with
20 the President Judges of the Commonwealth and Superior Courts.

21 (2) The Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the
22 Commonwealth, or their designees.

23 (3) The President pro tempore of the Senate, or his
24 designee.

25 (4) The Speaker of the House of Representatives, or his
26 designee.

27 (5) The Secretary of the Department of Education, or his
28 designee.

29 (6) The Chairman of the Pennsylvania Historical and
30 Museum Commission, or his designee.

1 (7) The chairmen of the majority and minority
2 Pennsylvania delegations in the United States House of
3 Representatives, or their designees.

4 (8) The United States Senators of the Commonwealth of
5 Pennsylvania, or their designees.

6 (c) Honorary members.--The President of the United States,
7 the Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the
8 United States House of Representatives, the President pro
9 tempore of the United States Senate and the Chief Justice of the
10 United States Supreme Court shall be invited to serve as
11 distinguished honorary members of the commission.

12 (d) Membership to be balanced.--Each of the individuals
13 making recommendations to the Governor regarding appointments
14 shall seek to achieve a balanced membership representing, to the
15 maximum extent practicable, the Commonwealth as a whole. The
16 commission members shall be chosen from among individuals who
17 have demonstrated allegiance to civic duty, strong sense of
18 public service, expertise in the learned professions and
19 abilities likely to contribute to the fulfillment of the duties
20 of the commission.

21 (e) Term of members.--Members of the commission shall be
22 appointed for the life of the commission.

23 (f) Chairman.--One of the members shall be appointed as
24 chairman, subject to approval of the majority of the commission,
25 by the Governor.

26 (g) Quorum.--Sixteen members of the commission shall
27 constitute a quorum. Membership attendance shall be made a part
28 of the record of the commission.

29 (h) Vacancies.--A vacancy in the commission resulting from
30 the death or resignation of a member shall not affect its powers

1 and shall be filled in the same manner in which the original
2 appointment was made.

3 (i) Members not to be compensated.--Members of the
4 commission shall receive no compensation for their services, but
5 shall be reimbursed for travel and other reasonable expenses
6 incurred by them in the performance of their duties.

7 Section 3. Administrative provisions and powers.

8 (a) Assistance from Department of Education.--The Department
9 of Education shall provide such secretarial and other staff
10 assistance as may be necessary to the proper functioning of the
11 commission, consistent with the laws of the Commonwealth.

12 (b) Commission to coordinate activities.--The commission
13 shall coordinate, generally, activities throughout all of the
14 Commonwealth and serve as a clearinghouse for the collection and
15 dissemination of information about bicentennial events and
16 plans.

17 (c) Planning and implementation of activities.--In planning
18 and implementing appropriate activities to commemorate the
19 bicentennial, the commission shall give due consideration to:

20 (1) The historical Pennsylvania State House setting in
21 which the Constitution was developed and ratified and the
22 ratification debates in the Pennsylvania State House of
23 Representatives and the State Convention of Ratification.

24 (2) The contribution of diverse ethnic, religious and
25 racial groups.

26 (3) The relationship and historical development of the
27 three branches of the government.

28 (4) The unique achievements and contributions of the
29 Pennsylvania participants in the Constitutional Convention of
30 1787.

1 (5) The diverse legal and philosophical views regarding
2 the Constitution.

3 (6) The need for reflection upon both academic and
4 scholarly views of the Constitution and the principle that
5 the document must be understood by the general public.

6 (7) The substantive provisions of the Constitution
7 itself.

8 (8) The impact of the Constitution on American life and
9 government.

10 (9) The need to encourage appropriate educational
11 curriculums designed to educate students at all levels of
12 learning on the drafting, ratification and history of the
13 Constitution and the specific provisions of that document.

14 (10) The significance of the principles and institutions
15 of the Constitution to other nations and their citizens.

16 (d) Commission to seek cooperation.--The commission shall
17 seek the cooperation, advice and assistance of both private and
18 governmental agencies, organizations and institutions.

19 Section 4. Powers and duties of commission.

20 The commission shall have the power and its duty shall be:

21 (1) To plan and develop activities appropriate to
22 commemorate the Bicentennial of the Constitution, including a
23 limited number of projects to be undertaken by the
24 Commonwealth seeking to harmonize and balance the important
25 goals of ceremony and celebration with the equally important
26 goals of scholarship and education.

27 (2) To encourage private organizations, county and
28 municipal governments and educational systems to organize and
29 participate in bicentennial activities commemorating or
30 examining the drafting, ratification and history of the

1 Constitution and the specific features of the document.

2 (3) To extend cooperation to all bicentennial agencies
3 or commissions established by the United States Congress and
4 the legislatures of all states. In doing so, it shall be the
5 policy of the commission to provide equal treatment to all
6 states, regardless of their date of establishment, in
7 recognition of the historic role of Pennsylvania as a source
8 of pioneers, culture, philosophy and system of self-
9 government.

10 (4) To enter into contracts and to execute all
11 instruments necessary or convenient for carrying on its
12 operations.

13 (5) To accept, on behalf of the Commonwealth, gifts,
14 donations, legacies and usages of money from individuals,
15 organizations, public or private corporations and other
16 similar entities.

17 (6) To solicit and raise moneys from public and private
18 sources through the sale of commemorative medals and other
19 items of a similar nature which promote the Bicentennial of
20 the Constitution.

21 Section 5. Report.

22 On February 1, 1986, the commission shall submit, to the
23 Governor and each house of the General Assembly, a comprehensive
24 report incorporating specific recommendations of the commission
25 for commemoration and coordination of the bicentennial and
26 related activities. This report shall be accompanied by a
27 summarization of all bicentennial projects proposed by persons,
28 organizations and institutions of the private sector which
29 contemplate no Federal or State financial subsidization, and
30 which are filed with the commission by the close of business on

1 December 31, 1985.

2 Section 6. Termination.

3 The commission shall terminate on December 31, 1988.

4 Section 7. Appropriation.

5 There is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education,
6 to assist in the work of the commission, the sum of \$50,000, or
7 as much thereof as may be necessary, to carry out the provisions
8 of this act. In addition, all moneys received from any other
9 sources as contributions to this program shall be paid into the
10 General Fund and credited to this appropriation. Funds
11 unencumbered and unexpended as of June 30, 1989, shall lapse
12 into the General Fund.

13 Section 8. Effective date.

14 This act shall take effect immediately.