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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 527 Session of  
2005

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INTRODUCED BY PERZEL, DeWEESE, CORRIGAN, TIGUE, HENNESSEY, DIVEN, O'NEILL, BALDWIN, BEYER, BUNT, BUTKOVITZ, CALTAGIRONE, CAPPELLI, CAWLEY, COHEN, COSTA, CRAHALLA, CRUZ, CURRY, DeLUCA, DERMODY, EACHUS, D. EVANS, FABRIZIO, FREEMAN, GEORGE, GODSHALL, GOODMAN, GRUCELA, HANNA, HARHAI, HASAY, HERSHEY, JAMES, W. KELLER, KENNEY, LEDERER, LEH, LESCOVITZ, LEVDANSKY, MARKOSEK, McCALL, McGEEHAN, McILHINNEY, MELIO, NAILOR, PALLONE, PETRARCA, PETRONE, PISTELLA, RAPP, READSHAW, REICHLEY, SAINATO, SANTONI, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, STABACK, TANGRETTI, J. TAYLOR, THOMAS, VEON, WALKO, WATSON, YOUNGBLOOD AND YUDICHAK, DECEMBER 5, 2005

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
DECEMBER 5, 2005

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A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the lack of due process in the 1876-1878 trials of  
2 several alleged members of the Molly Maguires and  
3 memorializing the Governor to issue an order acknowledging  
4 the same.

5 WHEREAS, From 1876 to 1878, several alleged members of the  
6 Molly Maguires in Carbon, Columbia, Northumberland and  
7 Schuylkill Counties were tried, convicted and sentenced to jail  
8 or hanged; and

9 WHEREAS, Agents and employees of the Philadelphia and Reading  
10 Railroad and Coal and Iron Company, the Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre  
11 Coal and Iron Company and the Lehigh Valley Railroad conducted  
12 the investigation, arrest and prosecution of these individuals;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Special prosecuting attorneys were used who were on

1 the payrolls of railroad and mining companies, jury selection  
2 was conducted in a manner which ensured ethnic bigotry and  
3 antibias, the trial judges were closely connected with the  
4 railroad and mining companies which instigated the  
5 investigations and trials, witnesses were intimidated to commit  
6 perjury against the defendants and entrapment was used to  
7 accumulate evidence; and

8 WHEREAS, To say that due process and constitutional rights  
9 were lacking in these trails would be an understatement; and

10 WHEREAS, As a result of these trials Barney Boyle, Kate  
11 Boyle, Patrick Butler, John Campbell, Dennis Canning, Patrick  
12 Dolan, Christopher Donnelly, Neil Dougherty, James Duffy, John  
13 Gibbons, Bridget Hyland, Michael Lawler, Charles McAllister,  
14 Patrick McKenna, Ned Monaghan, John Morris, Michael O'Brien,  
15 Patrick O'Donnell, Francis O'Neil and John O'Neil were sentenced  
16 to imprisonment; James Boyle, Alexander Campbell, James Carroll,  
17 John Donahue, Michael J. Doyle, Thomas Duffy, Edward Kelly, Hugh  
18 McGehan, Thomas Munley and James Roarity were hanged in 1877;  
19 Dennis Donnelly, Thomas Fisher, Patrick Hester, John Kehoe,  
20 Peter McHugh and Patrick Tully were hanged in 1878; and Martin  
21 Bergin, James McDonnell, Peter McManus and Charles Sharpe were  
22 hanged in 1879; and

23 WHEREAS, History does not question that crimes were committed  
24 by the Molly Maguires against coal mine owners, that coal miners  
25 were treated menially and unfairly by coal mine owners and that  
26 miners and owners struggled over the meager working conditions;  
27 and

28 WHEREAS, History also does not question the fundamental  
29 unconstitutionality of the trials, since it is well documented  
30 that a private corporation initiated the investigation through a

1 private, hired detective agency; a private police force arrested  
2 the alleged offenders; and coal company attorneys prosecuted  
3 them; therefore be it

4 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the  
5 lack of due process in the 1876-1878 trials of several alleged  
6 members of the Molly Maguires; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives memorialize the  
8 Honorable Edward C. Rendell, Governor of the Commonwealth to  
9 issue an order acknowledging the same.