

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 700 Session of 2010

INTRODUCED BY McCALL, BROWN, ADOLPH, BEAR, BELFANTI, BEYER, BISHOP, BOBACK, BOYD, BOYLE, BRENNAN, BRIGGS, BROOKS, CASORIO, CLYMER, COHEN, CONKLIN, D. COSTA, CREIGHTON, DALEY, DAY, DELOZIER, DeLUCA, DeWEESE, DIGIROLAMO, DONATUCCI, EVERETT, FABRIZIO, FAIRCHILD, FLECK, FRANKEL, FREEMAN, GABLER, GEIST, GEORGE, GIBBONS, GILLESPIE, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, GRELL, GROVE, GRUCELA, HARHART, HARKINS, HELM, HENNESSEY, HESS, HICKERNELL, JOHNSON, JOSEPHS, M. KELLER, KESSLER, KILLION, KIRKLAND, KNOWLES, KORTZ, KOTIK, KULA, MAJOR, LENTZ, LONGIETTI, MAHONEY, MANDERINO, MANN, MARKOSEK, MARSICO, MATZIE, McGEEHAN, MELIO, MICOZZIE, MILLARD, MILNE, MIRABITO, MOUL, MUNDY, MURPHY, MURT, OBERLANDER, M. O'BRIEN, O'NEILL, PARKER, PAYNE, PICKETT, PRESTON, PYLE, QUIGLEY, QUINN, RAPP, READSHAW, REICHLEY, ROCK, ROEBUCK, ROSS, SAINATO, SANTONI, SCAVELLO, SHAPIRO, SIPTROTH, SONNEY, STEVENSON, THOMAS, TRUE, VEREB, VULAKOVICH, WATSON, WHEATLEY, WHITE, YOUNGBLOOD AND YUDICHAK, MARCH 22, 2010

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35, MARCH 22, 2010

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the month of March 2010 as "National Women's History
2 Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, From the August 18, 1587, birth of Virginia Dare,
4 the first child born to English parents in the Americas, through
5 the first decade of the 21st century, Pennsylvania women and
6 women nationwide have made and continue to make historic
7 contributions to the strength and greatness of our nation and
8 this Commonwealth in many recorded and unrecorded ways,
9 including the struggle for enfranchisement and women's rights;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, In a March 31, 1776, letter, Abigail Adams, the wife
3 of the second President of the United States and mother of the
4 sixth, wrote to her husband, "I long to hear that you have
5 declared an Independency--and by the way in the new Code of Laws
6 which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire
7 you would remember the Ladies, and be more generous and
8 favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited
9 power into the hands of the Husbands... If perticular care and
10 attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment
11 a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in
12 which we have no voice, or Representation"; and

13 WHEREAS, In her letters and writings, Abigail Adams planted
14 the ideas that made both women and men of her time start to
15 think about the rights of women in a country founded on the
16 ideals of life, liberty and equality; and

17 WHEREAS, Generations later, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady
18 Stanton and Pennsylvanian Lucretia Mott embodied the first
19 generation of women's rights activists by working to secure
20 women's enfranchisement; and

21 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania played a prominent role in the suffrage
22 movement with Philadelphia being a hotbed of feminist agitation;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, In 1868, Susan B. Anthony read her "Declaration of
25 Rights of the Women of the United States," modeled after the
26 Declaration of Independence, in front of Philadelphia's
27 Independence Hall; and

28 WHEREAS, It was the lesser-known suffragists, such as
29 Pennsylvanians Dora Kelly Lewis and Caroline Katzenstein, who
30 inherited the struggle from Anthony, Stanton and Mott, and

oversaw the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which gave women the right to vote, on August 18, 1920; and

WHEREAS, Other lesser-known Pennsylvania women who were active in the suffrage movement included Ann Davies, Florence Kelley, Ann Preston and Emma Guffey Miller; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania women and women nationwide paved the way by suffering violence and threats of violence, jail and public ridicule during their struggles to eliminate gender, racial, social and cultural barriers to economic and political participation; and

WHEREAS, From civil rights activists Ida Wells-Barnett, Mary McLeod Bethune, Eleanor Roosevelt and Rosa Parks to lesser-known Elizabeth Jennings Brown who, not unlike Rosa Parks, became frustrated with her inability to freely use privately owned public transportation in New York City, women have long struggled to secure equal and fair treatment for all; and

WHEREAS, The commitment of women to gender and racial equality has resulted in the ascension of women in politics and government; and

WHEREAS, Martha G. Speiser, Alice M. Bentley, Helen Grimes and Sarah M. Gallaher were among a group of eight women first elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 1923; and

WHEREAS, Crystal Bird Fauset, who helped establish the Swarthmore College Institute of Race Relations, became the first African-American woman to be elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, at the time representing Philadelphia's 13th Legislative District; and

WHEREAS, In 1916, Jeanette Rankin of Montana became the first

woman to be elected to the United States House of Representatives; in 1965, Patsy Takemoto Mink of Hawaii became the first Asian-American woman so elected; and in 1969, Shirley Chisholm became the first African-American woman elected to the United States House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, Shirley Chisholm was an outspoken advocate for women and people of color during her seven terms in Congress; and

WHEREAS, In 1959, Juanita Kidd Stout became the first African-American woman in the nation to win election to a court of record when she won election to the Philadelphia Municipal Court; and

WHEREAS, Juanita Kidd Stout made history a second time in 1988 when her appointment to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court made her the first African-American woman to serve on a state supreme court; and

WHEREAS, In 1964, Margaret Chase Smith of Maine became the first woman nominated for President of the United States by a major political party and in 1984, Geraldine Ferraro was selected to run for Vice President, followed by Sarah Palin in 2008; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, Dr. Antonia Novello was sworn in as United States Surgeon General, becoming the first woman and the first Latina appointed to that position; and

WHEREAS, From the Honorable Sandra Day O'Connor, who became the first woman to serve as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court in 1981, to the Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who was appointed as an Associate Justice to that court in 1993, to the Honorable Sonia Sotomayor, who rose from the public housing projects of the Bronx to nomination and confirmation as the first Puerto Rican-American to serve as an

1 Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court in 2009,
2 and to Sandra Schultz Newman and Debra Todd who were the first
3 and second women elected to Pennsylvania's highest court,
4 respectively, women have broken the glass ceiling in all
5 branches of government; and

6 WHEREAS, Currently, 72 women hold statewide executive offices
7 nationwide; and

8 WHEREAS, Women hold a record number 1,799 seats in state
9 legislatures nationwide; and

10 WHEREAS, In 2009, the New Hampshire State Senate was the
11 first state legislative chamber to have a female majority with
12 thirteen women and eleven men; and

13 WHEREAS, Currently, women serve as president of the senate in
14 the states of New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Hawaii and
15 Rhode Island, and women serve as speakers of state houses in
16 Nevada, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Maine; and

17 WHEREAS, In 2009, the state of Maine became the first state
18 to have more women than men serving in the United States
19 Congress, and the state of New Hampshire has equal gender
20 representation in Congress; and

21 WHEREAS, With her election as State Treasurer in 1988,
22 Katherine Baker Knoll became the first woman in this
23 Commonwealth to be elected to a Statewide row office and the
24 first woman to serve as Lieutenant Governor when she was sworn
25 in as Pennsylvania's 30th Lieutenant Governor in 2003; and

26 WHEREAS, From Madeleine Korbil Albright, the first female
27 Secretary of State, to Condoleezza Rice, the first African-
28 American woman to serve as Secretary of State, to Hillary Rodham
29 Clinton, the first First Lady to win a United States Senate
30 seat, to run for the United States presidency and to later serve

1 as Secretary of State, American women continue to reach for
2 pinnacles of elected and political office nationally and
3 internationally; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1987, the United States Congress, encouraged by
5 petition of the National Women's History Project, adopted the
6 first resolution to recognize the entire month of March as
7 "Women's History Month" in order to commemorate the
8 accomplishments and contributions of women; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1998, President William J. Clinton signed the
10 "Women's Progress Commemoration Act" into law on the 150th
11 anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention, the first national
12 congregation on the condition of women in the United States, for
13 the purpose of commemorating, celebrating and preserving women's
14 history; and

15 WHEREAS, American women, including many Pennsylvania women,
16 have been leaders, not only in securing their own rights of
17 suffrage, but also in the abolitionist movement, the
18 emancipation movement, the suffrage movement, the labor movement
19 and the civil and equal rights movements; and

20 WHEREAS, 2010 is the 30th anniversary of the National Women's
21 History Project, which began with the proclamation by President
22 Jimmy Carter that declared the week of March 8, 1980, as the
23 first National Women's History Week; and

24 WHEREAS, The theme for the 2010 celebration of National
25 Women's History Month is "Writing Women Back into History"; and

26 WHEREAS, The recognition of March as "Women's History Month"
27 has highlighted the numerous contributions of women to the
28 progression of American society and their position at the
29 forefront of movements that created a more fair and just society
30 for all people; therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize March
2 2010 as "National Women's History Month" in Pennsylvania and
3 invite the women, men and children of this Commonwealth to
4 continue to explore the many roles women played and continue to
5 play to secure a just and fair democracy, to explore the
6 contributions of women to the greatness of this Commonwealth and
7 the nation and work to help "write women back into the history"
8 of our country and the world.