

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 1004 Session of 2014

INTRODUCED BY V. BROWN, READSHAW, DiGIROLAMO, HENNESSEY,  
 FREEMAN, BROWNLEE, McNEILL, THOMAS, COHEN, KINSEY,  
 YOUNGBLOOD, VEREB, ROSS, KIRKLAND, FARINA, WATSON, LUCAS,  
 MILLARD, McCARTER, SABATINA, MURT, MAHONEY, MAJOR,  
 CALTAGIRONE, PARKER AND PAINTER, SEPTEMBER 15, 2014

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, SEPTEMBER 15, 2014

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring and recognizing Pennsylvania's American Indian peoples  
 2 and communities and recognizing the first Saturday in October  
 3 of every year as "Indigenous Peoples Day" in Pennsylvania.

4 WHEREAS, The indigenous peoples of North America, the first  
 5 Americans, have woven rich and diverse threads into the tapestry  
 6 of the heritage and history of the United States and this  
 7 Commonwealth and, throughout their history in this great land,  
 8 have faced moments of triumph and tragedy alike; and

9 WHEREAS, American Indians have inhabited the land which is  
 10 now known as Pennsylvania for 5,000 years; and

11 WHEREAS, Former Secretary of the Pennsylvania Historical and  
 12 Museum Commission, Dr. George P. Donehoo, acknowledged that, "No  
 13 state in the entire nation is richer in Indian names or in fact  
 14 Indian history than Pennsylvania"; and

15 WHEREAS, Some of the many great nations that inhabited the  
 16 territory known as Pennsylvania were and are the Lenape,  
 17 Cherokee, Susquehanna, Erie, Mohawk, Huron, Allegany, Shawnee,

1 Susquehannock, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, Chippewa and Ottawa  
2 Indians, as well as many others who sustained themselves in the  
3 natural environment of the Keystone State; and

4 WHEREAS, Precolonial Indian villages and ancient burial  
5 mounds, which were plentiful and spread en masse across the  
6 territory now known as Pennsylvania, were destroyed or lost due  
7 to agricultural development and industrialization; and

8 WHEREAS, McKees Rocks Mound in McKeesport is one of those  
9 ancient burial mounds in this Commonwealth that stands as a  
10 testament to the highly civilized societies of indigenous  
11 American peoples and is reported as one of the oldest places of  
12 human habitation in eastern North America; and

13 WHEREAS, Many of Pennsylvania's busiest highways, such as  
14 Route 1, Route 40, Route 30, Route 611 and Route 590 started as  
15 American Indian paths that were used for trade and hunting; and

16 WHEREAS, American Indian culture and society have contributed  
17 to the agricultural development, medicinal discoveries,  
18 environmental preservation, commerce, governmental institutions  
19 and structure and many other facets of our country, State and  
20 cities; and

21 WHEREAS, Many American Indian peoples live in our urban  
22 cities, including 4,000 in Philadelphia and more than 81,092 in  
23 Pennsylvania according to the 2010 Census; and

24 WHEREAS, Many of the American Indians living in our counties,  
25 cities, townships, boroughs and towns have gone through great  
26 adversities to maintain their cultural and ethnic identities;  
27 and

28 WHEREAS, From the 1800s through the 1900s, many southern and  
29 northern American Indians were mislabeled "colored," "Negro,"  
30 "mulatto" and "white," resulting from the dilution of their

1 identities; and

2 WHEREAS, Many have persevered through trauma and tragedy to  
3 preserve culture and traditions to become beacons of light for  
4 future generations; and

5 WHEREAS, American Indian culture and American Indians are to  
6 be respected and honored; and

7 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth acknowledges the importance of  
8 educating the citizens of this Commonwealth about the heritage,  
9 history, art, archeology and traditions of the American Indian  
10 peoples and communities in Pennsylvania; and

11 WHEREAS, American Indians continue to contribute to the  
12 culture of this Commonwealth through the ancestral preservation  
13 of their heritage; and

14 WHEREAS, Their dedicated efforts to honor their proud  
15 heritage have been instrumental in developing a deeper  
16 understanding within Pennsylvania of the vibrant and ancient  
17 customs of the indigenous peoples living in this Commonwealth  
18 today; and

19 WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples Day properly notes the influences  
20 of indigenous culture throughout our history; and

21 WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples Day commemorates the  
22 contributions and resiliency of indigenous communities while  
23 also celebrating the preservation of their unique cultural  
24 heritage and ethnic identities; therefore be it

25 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize and  
26 honor the myriad of contributions of American Indians, recognize  
27 the strong and living traditions of the first peoples to call  
28 our land home and look forward to working with American Indians  
29 in an effort to further preserve their heritage within this  
30 Commonwealth; and be it further

1       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize the  
2 first Saturday in October of every year, which this year is  
3 October 4, 2014, as "Indigenous Peoples Day" in Pennsylvania.