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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 777 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY MEHAFFIE, PICKETT, BURNS, JOZWIAK, MERSKI,  
MILLARD, NEILSON AND ZIMMERMAN, MARCH 3, 2021

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, MARCH 3, 2021

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AN ACT

1 Designating the amethyst as the official State gemstone of the  
2 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and designating celestine as  
3 the official State mineral of the Commonwealth of  
4 Pennsylvania.

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

7 Section 1. Findings and declarations.

8 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

9 (1) Pennsylvania is well known for a variety of vast  
10 deposits of minerals, including quartz, which is mined in  
11 this Commonwealth.

12 (2) Amethyst is a vibrant, purple gemstone and the most  
13 beautiful type of quartz.

14 (3) Amethyst appropriately represents Pennsylvania  
15 because it is found in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, and has  
16 a captivating beauty.

17 (4) Amethyst is the focal point of the crown worn by the  
18 winner of the Miss Pennsylvania pageant.

19 (5) The Miss Pennsylvania crown and the amethyst

1 gemstones featured in the crown have many unique connections  
2 to Pennsylvania.

3 (6) The Miss Pennsylvania crown was commissioned by the  
4 Pennsylvania Jewelers Association and handmade by  
5 Pennsylvania resident and jeweler Jim Seitzer.

6 (7) The Miss Pennsylvania crown is encrusted with 92  
7 carats of amethyst donated by jewelers throughout  
8 Pennsylvania.

9 (8) The Miss Pennsylvania crown has a design which is  
10 inspired by the keystone shape to pay homage to  
11 Pennsylvania's nickname, "The Keystone State."

12 (9) Pennsylvania is nicknamed "The Keystone State"  
13 because Pennsylvania was the middle colony of the original 13  
14 American colonies.

15 (10) Accordingly, a 37-carat amethyst gemstone in the  
16 shape of a keystone is at the center of the Miss Pennsylvania  
17 crown.

18 (11) The official State plant of Pennsylvania is the  
19 Penngift Crownvetch, commonly known as the "Purple Crown."

20 (12) It is fitting that Pennsylvania be represented by  
21 the beauty of the attractive purple blooms of the "Purple  
22 Crown" and the radiant purple amethyst gemstones of the  
23 "Purple Crown" worn by Miss Pennsylvania.

24 (13) Celestine was first discovered in Bellwood, near  
25 Frankstown, Blair County, Pennsylvania, in 1791 by Andreas  
26 Gotthelf Schutz, a visiting naturalist from Freiberg,  
27 Germany. In 1797, Martin Klaproth, the leading chemist in  
28 Germany of his time, determined the chemical composition of  
29 celestine as strontium sulfite. Abraham Gottlob Werner, a  
30 founding father of the sciences of mineralogy and physical

1 geology, offered the name and physical description in 1798.  
2 The first crystal structure of celestine was published in  
3 1925 by R. W. James and W. A. Wood.

4 (14) Celestine derives its name from Latin *caelestis*,  
5 meaning "heavenly," in allusion to the beautiful sky-blue  
6 color of the first specimen from this Commonwealth. Celestine  
7 grows as large, clear crystals that can be faceted into gems.  
8 With the same brilliance as topaz, celestine crystals are  
9 lovely gemstones.

10 (15) Celestine has been found in Bellwood, Blair County;  
11 East Salem, Juniata County; Lime Bluff, Lycoming County;  
12 Meckley's Quarry, Northumberland County; Allenport,  
13 Huntingdon County; and Faylors Middle Creek Quarry, Mifflin  
14 County.

15 (16) Celestine is a major ore for strontium, whose  
16 compounds are responsible for the bright red flames in  
17 fireworks and road flares. Strontium salts also were employed  
18 for refining beet sugar, and, during the long period when  
19 cathode-ray tubes dominated television technology, strontium  
20 was added to the glass to absorb X-rays for the protection of  
21 the viewer.

22 (17) Designating celestine as our State mineral will  
23 remind the residents of Pennsylvania that our Commonwealth  
24 boasts a rich natural history that is marked by a mineralogy  
25 of great beauty and diversity. This act will provide a  
26 positive experience to countless school children whose  
27 interest in Pennsylvania history and geology will be piqued.  
28 Section 2. Official State gemstone.

29 Amethyst is hereby designated as the official State gemstone  
30 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

1 Section 3. Official State mineral.

2 Celestine, a mineral appearing as sky-blue or white  
3 orthorhombic crystals or in fibrous masses, is hereby selected,  
4 designated and adopted as the official State mineral of the  
5 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

6 Section 4. Effective date.

7 This act shall take effect immediately.