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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

## No. 138

Session of  
1981

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INTRODUCED BY RITTER, CAWLEY, WARGO, LESCOVITZ, COHEN, ZWIKL, SEVENTY, STUBAN, CLARK, LETTERMAN, MORRIS, COLAFELLA, STEIGHNER, WOZNIAK, SHOWERS, KUKOVICH, WACHOB, DeWEESE, HOFFEL, HALUSKA, OLASZ, LIVENGOD, PENDLETON, TRELLO, PISTELLA, MICHLOVIC, GAMBLE, WAMBACH, BELFANTI, CAPPABIANCA, BLAUM, TIGUE, CALTAGIRONE, SHUPNIK, GRUITZA, McCALL, COWELL, LUCYK, D. R. WRIGHT, EVANS, KOWALYSHYN, VAN HORNE, MANDERINO, IRVIS, A. K. HUTCHINSON, DUFFY, F. E. TAYLOR, STEWART, SWEET AND FEE, DECEMBER 15, 1981

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, DECEMBER 15, 1981

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In the House of Representatives, December 15, 1981

1 WHEREAS, The crime of arson is the root cause of a multitude  
2 of ills--some are economic, some social and humanitarian and  
3 some political; and

4 WHEREAS, The economic impact is staggering--property losses  
5 go as high as \$2,000,000,000 a year in the United States. The  
6 hidden cost of arson multiplies this figure many times in terms  
7 of lost jobs and income, the erosion of the tax base and the  
8 public moneys needed to pay for firefighters and police  
9 protection; and

10 WHEREAS, There are tremendous social costs--the thousands of  
11 families burned out of their homes and the systematic  
12 destruction of entire neighborhoods; and

13 WHEREAS, There is a heavy toll in human misery--more than 500  
14 lives lost to arson fires each year in the United States and

1 more than 10,000 injuries; and

2 WHEREAS, The political considerations are also significant.  
3 Arson cuts across a majority of the public policy issues which  
4 concern public authorities and insurers--the charges of  
5 redlining, of unfair discrimination, criticisms of underwriting  
6 and claims practices; and

7 WHEREAS, There were 5,087 arsons reported in the Commonwealth  
8 in 1980; and

9 WHEREAS, The total property damage from arson in the  
10 Commonwealth in 1980 was \$78,500,000; and

11 WHEREAS, The enforcement of our arson laws is of the utmost  
12 importance to the people of the Commonwealth; therefore be it

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
14 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby urges the Governor to  
15 establish a toll-free number in the Pennsylvania Emergency  
16 Management Agency Office of the State Fire Commissioner for the  
17 reporting of information relating to arson and that all  
18 information that is reported shall be turned over to the  
19 respective law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction wherein  
20 the fire occurred and to the Office of the Attorney General for  
21 the use in prosecuting the offenders. The Attorney General is  
22 urged to work in concert with the respective county district  
23 attorneys; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be immediately  
25 transmitted to the Governor and to the Attorney General.