

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 217

Session of
1985

INTRODUCED BY PITTS, COHEN, IRVIS, MANDERINO AND HAYES,
DECEMBER 11, 1985

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, DECEMBER 11, 1985

A RESOLUTION

1 Memorializing the President of the United States to express to
2 the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the
3 opposition of the United States to exploitation of workers in
4 forced-labor camps.

5 WHEREAS, International law in this century has recognized
6 that everyone has the right to liberty and security of person
7 and has repeatedly condemned the used of forced or compulsory
8 labor; and

9 WHEREAS, On February 9, 1983, the United States Department of
10 State documented that the Government of the Union of Soviet
11 Socialist Republics operates the largest forced-labor system in
12 the world, comprising some 1,100 forced-labor camps, and that
13 this system "gravely infringes internationally recognized
14 fundamental human rights"; and

15 WHEREAS, The United States Department of State has estimated
16 that the Soviet system "includes an estimated 4,000,000 forced
17 laborers, of whom at least 10,000 are considered to be political
18 and religious prisoners"; and

1 WHEREAS, The International Commission on Human Rights,
2 following a hearing in Bonn on November 18 and 19, 1982,
3 concluded that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
4 "continues the deplorable practice of forced labor in
5 manufacturing and construction projects" and that prisoners,
6 "among them women and children, are forced to work under
7 conditions of extreme hardship, including malnutrition,
8 inadequate shelter and clothing, and severe discipline"; and

9 WHEREAS, For nearly 30 years the International Labor
10 Organization has investigated allegations concerning forced
11 labor in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Soviet
12 authorities have refused to provide responses satisfactory to
13 the International Labor Organization or to open their entire
14 forced-labor system to impartial international investigation;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Through these repressive policies the Union of
17 Soviet Socialist Republics has failed to fulfill its solemn
18 undertakings as a signatory of the Helsinki Accords, The United
19 Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and
20 the Anti-Slavery Convention of 1926, as well as the Constitution
21 of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and

22 WHEREAS, The continued violation of human rights by the Union
23 of Soviet Socialist Republics and, in particular, the use of
24 forced labor are factors which contribute to world tension and
25 which create concern about the validity of the international
26 commitments of the Soviet Union; therefore be it

27 RESOLVED, That it is the sense of the Pennsylvania House of
28 Representatives that the policies of forced labor are morally
29 reprehensible; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania House of Representatives

1 memorialize the President of the United States of America, at
2 every opportunity and in the strongest terms, to express to the
3 Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the
4 opposition of the United States to these reprehensible policies
5 and the desire that the Government of the Union of Soviet
6 Socialist Republics cease these policies and honor the
7 international commitments in the Helsinki Accords, the United
8 Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and
9 the Anti-Slavery Convention of 1926; and be it further
10 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to
11 the President of the United States.