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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 88

Session of  
1991

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INTRODUCED BY HASAY, CAPPABIANCA AND SERAFINI, APRIL 16, 1991

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, APRIL 16, 1991

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A RESOLUTION

1 Memorializing the President of the United States and the  
2 Department of State to recognize Alaska's interest in the  
3 boundary negotiations between the United States and the  
4 Soviet Union and to include Alaska in the negotiating process  
5 at the proper time, recognizing Alaska's inherent interest in  
6 these negotiations.

7 WHEREAS, Negotiations are underway and have continued since  
8 1981 between the United States Department of State and the  
9 government of the Soviet Union in an effort to determine the  
10 status of five strategic Alaskan arctic islands and an immense  
11 outer continental shelf; and

12 WHEREAS, The economic issues of petroleum, fishery and other  
13 valuable resources will have great impact on Alaska's welfare  
14 and prosperity; and

15 WHEREAS, Among all American states, Alaska is unique in that  
16 it is the only state that shares its boundaries with more than  
17 one foreign country; and

18 WHEREAS, Its boundaries are of vital importance to Alaska's  
19 State Government and the sovereignty of the United States; and

20 WHEREAS, Alaska has, to date, not been included in any of the

1 negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union; and  
2 WHEREAS, Article II, section 2(2) of the United States  
3 Constitution which states: "He (the President) shall have Power,  
4 by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate to make  
5 Treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senators present concur..."  
6 makes the President the official responsible for international  
7 agreements and treaties with the Senate's consent with no  
8 implied or stated right of any state to be included in or  
9 consent to the terms of any boundary dispute; and

10 WHEREAS, During 1842, the United States Secretary of State  
11 Daniel Webster negotiated with Lord Ashburton, the British  
12 envoy, over a disputed boundary along the border between Canada  
13 and the states of Maine and Massachusetts; a dispute which began  
14 at the close of the American Revolution and continued for 60  
15 years bringing the two countries to the brink of war; and

16 WHEREAS, Secretary of State Webster, knowing that treaties  
17 require approval by two-thirds of the Senators present and  
18 subsequent ratification by the President, did, in an attempt to  
19 gain support in the Senate for the treaty and with President  
20 Tyler's approval, propose to Lord Ashburton that commissioners  
21 from the two states be asked to participate in the negotiations.  
22 With Lord Ashburton's consent, four commissioners from Maine and  
23 three from Massachusetts were appointed to join the  
24 negotiations. Webster thereby established a precedent which  
25 would allow inclusion of states in future boundary negotiations  
26 when necessary; therefore be it

27 RESOLVED, That the President of the United States and the  
28 Department of State take the example set by Secretary of State  
29 Daniel Webster in negotiating the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of  
30 1842 by including Alaska, at the earliest appropriate time in

1 their ongoing boundary negotiation, thereby recognizing Alaska's  
2 inherent interests in the establishment of this boundary; and be  
3 it further

4       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
5 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorialize the President of the  
6 United States and the Department of State to recognize Alaska's  
7 interest in the boundary negotiations between the United States  
8 and the Soviet Union and to include Alaska in the negotiating  
9 process at the proper time; and be it further

10       RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to  
11 the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the  
12 Vice President of the United States as the presiding officer of  
13 the Senate, to each member of the Senate and to the Governor of  
14 Alaska.