
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 182 Session of
1995

INTRODUCED BY MAYERNIK, BOSCOLA, YOUNGBLOOD, ROBERTS, CLYMER,
SHANER, TIGUE, STABACK, MIHALICH, TRELLO, HALUSKA, B. SMITH,
DALEY, FARGO, FICHTER, SCHULER, VAN HORNE, BEBKO-JONES,
LESCOVITZ, PESCI, WALKO, KING, COY, SCHRODER, GIGLIOTTI,
MARKOSEK, DRUCE, PITTS, READSHAW, CORRIGAN, MANDERINO,
O'BRIEN, HERSHEY, HESS, HENNESSEY, RUBLEY, JOSEPHS, BELARDI,
FARMER, L. I. COHEN, DONATUCCI, TRAVAGLIO, ROBINSON, LAUGHLIN
AND ITKIN, JUNE 21, 1995

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
JUNE 21, 1995

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring the Superior Court on its 100th Anniversary.

2 WHEREAS, In 1895, the General Assembly established the
3 Superior Court to hear appeals from certain decisions of the
4 courts of common pleas of this Commonwealth; and

5 WHEREAS, From time to time the General Assembly and the
6 Supreme Court have expanded the court's jurisdiction, and today
7 it decides appeals touching almost every aspect of life and
8 commerce in this Commonwealth, including family matters, such as
9 child custody, visitation, adoption, divorce and support,
10 criminal cases, matters concerning wills and estates, property
11 disputes and those involving damages for breach of contract or
12 personal injury; and

13 WHEREAS, In 1968 the voters of this Commonwealth adopted
14 constitutional amendments making the Superior Court a

1 constitutional court; and

2 WHEREAS, Judges of the court are also responsible for hearing
3 applications made by the Attorney General and district attorneys
4 under the Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Control Act,
5 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 57 (relating to wiretapping and electronic
6 surveillance); and

7 WHEREAS, The Superior Court is often the final arbiter of
8 legal disputes in this Commonwealth; and

9 WHEREAS, Although the Supreme Court may grant a petition for
10 an appeal from a decision of the Superior Court, in the large
11 majority of cases such petitions are denied; and

12 WHEREAS, Appeals allowed to the United States Supreme Court
13 are even more infrequent; and

14 WHEREAS, The Superior Court was originally composed of seven
15 judges who sat together to hear every case; and

16 WHEREAS, In 1978, the Supreme Court, citing the "exceedingly
17 heavy volume of appeals coming to the Superior Court," exercised
18 its constitutional supervisory powers over the courts of this
19 Commonwealth and authorized the Superior Court to sit in panels
20 of three judges, composed of a Supreme Court justice, a Superior
21 Court judge and a common pleas judge to handle a significant
22 number of homicide cases transferred to the Superior Court; and

23 WHEREAS, By rule, the Supreme Court provided that a three-
24 judge panel and would constitute a quorum and speak for the
25 entire Superior Court, permitting panels of Superior Court
26 judges to resolve cases filed in this court; and

27 WHEREAS, In 1979, the voters approved an amendment to the
28 Constitution of Pennsylvania providing that the Superior Court
29 might be enlarged permanently; and

30 WHEREAS, Pursuant to this constitutional change, the General

1 Assembly in 1980 provided for the gubernatorial appointment of
2 eight additional judges; and

3 WHEREAS, By the start of 1986, all 15 Superior Court seats
4 had been filled by election; and

5 WHEREAS, Under statute, judges gain seniority by length of
6 continuous service on the court, with elected judges receiving
7 seniority over those serving by appointment; and

8 WHEREAS, Judges elected or appointed together determine
9 seniority by lot; and

10 WHEREAS, The president judge is chosen by election of the
11 court to serve a five-year term; and

12 WHEREAS, Except for cases in which the court specially orders
13 consideration by an en banc panel of nine judges, the court
14 continues to sit in three-judge panels, assisted by senior
15 judges specially appointed by the Supreme Court; and

16 WHEREAS, The Superior Court of Pennsylvania is one of the
17 busiest intermediate appellate courts in this country; and

18 WHEREAS, The Superior Court had over 7,500 appeals filed last
19 year, yet the court remains current with a mean disposition time
20 of less than 10 months; therefore be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives congratulate the
22 Superior Court on its 100th Anniversary for its long and
23 honorable service to the judicial system and the citizens of
24 this Commonwealth.