
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 124 Session of
2001

INTRODUCED BY BRIGHTBILL, JUBELIRER, ARMSTRONG, BELL, CONTI,
CORMAN, DENT, EARLL, ERICKSON, GERLACH, GREENLEAF, HELFRICK,
HOLL, LEMMOND, MADIGAN, MOWERY, MURPHY, ORIE, PICCOLA, PUNT,
RHOADES, ROBBINS, SCARNATI, THOMPSON, TOMLINSON, WAUGH,
WENGER, D. WHITE AND M. WHITE, OCTOBER 2, 2001

INTRODUCED AND ADOPTED, OCTOBER 2, 2001

A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating and honoring the efforts, accomplishments and
2 achievements of Governor Thomas J. Ridge.

3 WHEREAS, Due to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on
4 the United States and her people, the President of the United
5 States, George W. Bush, has called upon our Governor, Thomas J.
6 Ridge, to defend our nation as the head of the Office of
7 Homeland Security; and

8 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge must heed a call to serve our country
9 that results in Pennsylvania's loss but the nation's gain; and

10 WHEREAS, Bound by a sense of duty that knows no personal
11 sacrifice too great for one's nation, Governor Ridge is
12 resigning as Governor; and

13 WHEREAS, His past experiences and service make Governor Ridge
14 the right person to assume such an important task at this
15 crucial time; and

16 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge has a daunting task involving the

1 coordination of activities by more than 60 vastly divergent
2 agencies, bureaus and departments in the fight against
3 terrorism; and

4 WHEREAS, His many skills and talents will be challenged as at
5 no time in the past as Governor Ridge works to form these
6 entities into a coordinated national security organization; and

7 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge is a native Pennsylvanian who was
8 born in Munhall, an area of Pittsburgh, and raised in Erie; and

9 WHEREAS, He received a scholarship to Harvard University and
10 graduated with honors; and

11 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge first served his country during
12 military service in Vietnam, receiving decorations for bravery
13 and valor; and

14 WHEREAS, He returned home from Vietnam and finished law
15 school at the Dickinson School of Law; and

16 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge served his hometown of Erie as an
17 assistant district attorney; and

18 WHEREAS, In 1982 he became the first enlisted man who served
19 in Vietnam to be elected to the Congress of the United States,
20 and he ably served his constituents for 12 years as a Republican
21 in a heavily Democratic district; and

22 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge left Erie to serve all of
23 Pennsylvania when he was elected Governor in 1994; and

24 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge was handily reelected in 1998 with
25 57% of the vote in a four-way race, a percentage that was the
26 highest for a Republican governor in Pennsylvania in more than
27 half a century, and his 780,000-vote victory margin was the
28 largest for a Republican governor in Pennsylvania history; and

29 WHEREAS, As Governor he endeavored to revitalize the economy
30 of Pennsylvania by creating hundreds of thousands of new job

1 opportunities and cutting taxes for seven straight years, every
2 year of his administration; and

3 WHEREAS, In May 2000 Governor Ridge signed the largest tax
4 cut in Pennsylvania history, amounting to nearly \$775 million;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, His legislative accomplishments are varied and have
7 had a direct impact on making the lives of Pennsylvania's
8 citizens better; and

9 WHEREAS, These accomplishments include overhauling the
10 workers' compensation system, reforming Pennsylvania's welfare
11 program, bringing much-needed improvements to our highway system
12 and pushing through tough anticrime measures during his first
13 months in office; and

14 WHEREAS, Since 1995, Pennsylvania families and employers have
15 saved nearly \$15 billion through tax cuts, workers' compensation
16 reform, reduced red tape and electric competition; and

17 WHEREAS, Under Governor Ridge's dynamic leadership our
18 Commonwealth has one of the most competitive utility markets,
19 with Pennsylvania becoming the first state to enable consumers
20 to shop competitively for both electricity and natural gas and
21 being named the number one state for electric deregulation; and

22 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's tax-free Keystone Opportunity Zones
23 were named the best statewide economic-development strategy in
24 the nation; and

25 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge signed the nation's first model
26 electronic commerce law; and

27 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge eliminated the State tax on computer
28 services and created a first-in-the-nation "Tax-Free PC"
29 holiday, thereby closing Pennsylvania's digital divide; and

30 WHEREAS, In May 2000 Governor Ridge signed into law the

1 Education Empowerment Act to help more than a quarter-million
2 kids in Pennsylvania's lowest-performing schools; and

3 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's children are the beneficiaries of his
4 bold vision for education; and

5 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge won passage of charter public
6 schools, alternative education for disruptive students,
7 professional development for teachers and new standards
8 requiring future teachers to earn higher grades in more
9 demanding courses; and

10 WHEREAS, He made a historic \$125 million investment to
11 improve reading proficiency and upgrade libraries and invested
12 more than \$200 million in education technology, increasing State
13 support of Pennsylvania public schools at nearly twice the rate
14 of inflation; and

15 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania also has become a national leader in
16 developing a new environmental partnership, and Governor Ridge's
17 common-sense Land Recycling Program is a national model; and

18 WHEREAS, There are new businesses with more than 20,000
19 people working in productive jobs on nearly 800 formerly
20 abandoned industrial sites, and in 1999 Governor Ridge won
21 passage of "Growing Greener" legislation to make Pennsylvania's
22 largest environmental investment ever, nearly \$650 million; and

23 WHEREAS, In 2000 Governor Ridge won his "Growing Smarter"
24 land-use plan to give communities new land-use tools to control
25 sprawl while still respecting private property rights; and

26 WHEREAS, More than 100,000 children now get free or low-cost
27 health care through Pennsylvania's nationally recognized
28 Children's Health Insurance Program, a 145% increase since
29 Governor Ridge took office in 1995; and

30 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's welfare rolls are at their lowest in

1 three decades, and since Governor Ridge and the General Assembly
2 made sweeping changes to the State's welfare system in 1996,
3 more than 210,000 families have left the welfare rolls and have
4 become gainfully employed; and

5 WHEREAS, Governor Ridge directed the money from the
6 negotiated tobacco settlement towards serving our most vital
7 health care needs, thus placing us in a sound position for this
8 critical aspect of Pennsylvania's future; therefore be it

9 RESOLVED, That the Senate, together with the citizens of
10 Pennsylvania, recognize and laud Governor Thomas J. Ridge for
11 his bold leadership and express profound gratitude to him for
12 making Pennsylvania a better place in which to live and raise
13 our families; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the Senate congratulate Governor Ridge on his
15 new mission as Director of the Office of Homeland Security and
16 wish him well as he works to keep the United States safe.