

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1495 Session of  
2007

INTRODUCED BY GRUCELA, WOJNAROSKI, DALLY, SHIMKUS, PASHINSKI,  
BRENNAN, YUDICHAK, DIGIROLAMO, D. EVANS, FABRIZIO, GALLOWAY,  
GEIST, GEORGE, GIBBONS, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, HARHART, HARKINS,  
HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, KOTIK, KULA, MAHONEY, MANN, MARSHALL,  
MENSCH, M. O'BRIEN, O'NEILL, RAMALEY, READSHAW, SANTONI,  
SCAVELLO, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, TANGRETTI, THOMAS, VEREB,  
VULAKOVICH, WALKO, WATSON AND YOUNGBLOOD, JUNE 7, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, JUNE 7, 2007

AN ACT

1 Designating polka music as the official folk music of the  
2 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and designating the American  
3 square dance as the official folk dance of the Commonwealth  
4 of Pennsylvania.

5 WHEREAS, Polka music originated in Europe, stemming from  
6 classical origins, and was brought to this country with many  
7 groups of immigrants from Europe; and

8 WHEREAS, Polka music was transformed into a newer form of  
9 music in the 1920s and 1930s and is still evolving; and

10 WHEREAS, Modern polka music has been a popular form of music  
11 in this Commonwealth during the 20th century; and

12 WHEREAS, The "Pennsylvania Polka" is one of the most famous  
13 and respected polkas heard throughout the United States; and

14 WHEREAS, Polka music is a main part of many major festivals  
15 in this Commonwealth as demonstrated by the Polka Fireworks  
16 Festival held at the Seven Springs Resort in Champion on the

1 July 4th weekend, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa  
2 in Doylestown held in September and the most well-attended  
3 festival in the United States with over one million people  
4 attending in 1997, Musikfest in Bethlehem, all of which are  
5 nationally renowned; and

6 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has numerous facilities specifically  
7 used for polka music, such as Fiedor's Grove, simply known as  
8 "The Grove" throughout the national polka community, located  
9 near Mt. Pleasant, and Jolly Joe Timmer's Picnic Grove at Point  
10 Phillips in Northampton County where dances are conducted  
11 throughout the year; and

12 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is represented in the Polka Hall of  
13 Fame by Walt Groller of Whitehall and Jolly Joe Timmer of  
14 Bethlehem; and

15 WHEREAS, Some of the leading polka bands in the United States  
16 are from Pennsylvania; and

17 WHEREAS, Polka music can be heard on many radio stations  
18 throughout this Commonwealth; and

19 WHEREAS, Dancing to, listening to and performing polka music  
20 is still and will continue to be a popular form of musical  
21 expression with the residents of this Commonwealth; and

22 WHEREAS, Square dance is in itself representative of the  
23 melting pot of our nation having been brought to this country by  
24 our pioneers; and

25 WHEREAS, The ancestry of American square dance can be traced  
26 as far back as 1450, as shown by its genealogical history, and  
27 includes a multitude of dance forms from England, Germany,  
28 Poland, Ireland, Scotland and Mexico; and

29 WHEREAS, Records in American history from 1651 show American  
30 square dance has been danced through the years dating back to

1 the days of our first settlers; and

2 WHEREAS, Square dance offers fun and fellowship to both young  
3 and old as well as persons with disabilities, with no  
4 restrictions as to race, color or creed; and

5 WHEREAS, Due to the popularity of American square dance,  
6 square dance federations have been formed in every state in the  
7 United States and in most foreign countries; and

8 WHEREAS, Square dance is the American folk dance which  
9 includes squares, rounds, contra, clogging, country western and  
10 line dancing; and

11 WHEREAS, Since 1951 square dance enthusiasts have joined  
12 together for a National Square and Round Dance Convention; and

13 WHEREAS, Since 1994 the Pennsylvania Square and Round Dance  
14 Federation has sponsored annual State Square and Round Dance  
15 Conventions in this Commonwealth.

16 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
17 hereby enacts as follows:

18 Section 1. Designation of official folk music of the  
19 Commonwealth.

20 Polka music is hereby selected, designated and adopted as the  
21 official folk music of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

22 Section 2. Designation of official folk dance of the  
23 Commonwealth.

24 The American square dance is hereby selected, designated and  
25 adopted in perpetuity as the official folk dance of the  
26 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and added to the array of symbols  
27 of our Commonwealth.

28 Section 3. Effective date.

29 This act shall take effect immediately.