
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 295 Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY BELFANTI, DIGIROLAMO, SHIMKUS, BLACKWELL, RAMALEY,
SIPTROTH, GALLOWAY, CAPPELLI, MANN, BAKER, BISHOP, BOBACK,
CALTAGIRONE, COHEN, CREIGHTON, DENLINGER, DONATUCCI,
FABRIZIO, GEIST, GEORGE, GINGRICH, GRUCELA, HENNESSEY,
HERSHEY, HESS, KILLION, KIRKLAND, MAJOR, MANTZ, MARKOSEK,
MCILHATTAN, R. MILLER, MUSTIO, M. O'BRIEN, O'NEILL, PALLONE,
PAYNE, RAPP, READSHAW, REICHLEY, ROSS, RUBLEY, SAINATO,
SANTONI, SCAVELLO, SONNEY, STABACK, VULAKOVICH, WALKO,
WOJNAROSKI, MILLARD, MICOZZIE, PYLE AND MOYER, MAY 23, 2007

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
MAY 23, 2007

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating May 22, 2007, as "Braille Literacy Awareness Day" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Braille, the language system of raised dots, is a
4 truly successful medium of literacy, as it empowers blind and
5 visually impaired members of our communities to effectively and
6 efficiently read and write; and

7 WHEREAS, The inventor of this system, Louis Braille, was born
8 in 1809 and lost his vision at an early age due to complications
9 from an accidental eye injury; and

10 WHEREAS, Louis Braille's education consisted of lectures and
11 a limited number of books with oversized, raised print, but as
12 an intelligent and creative student, he sought alternative
13 methods to learn and express himself; and

14 WHEREAS, By the age of 15, Louis Braille adapted a

1 complicated system of raised marks, first used in battlefield
2 communications and called night writing, into an easier-to-use
3 language of raised dots, each representing a letter of the
4 alphabet; and

5 WHEREAS, Louis Braille's system of writing allowed books for
6 the blind to contain more characters and to maintain more
7 compact sizes; and

8 WHEREAS, Later in life, Louis Braille developed Braille
9 representations for music and mathematics; and

10 WHEREAS, Louis Braille's system has been changed little and
11 still consists of letters represented by cells of no more than
12 six dots, punctuation and contractions to speed reading and
13 writing; and

14 WHEREAS, Although the usefulness of Braille was recognized,
15 it was not widely accepted until 1868, when it was publicized
16 and taught by a group that became known as the British Royal
17 Institute for the Blind; and

18 WHEREAS, It was not until the 20th century that Braille
19 become the official method of reading and writing for blind
20 citizens in the United States; and

21 WHEREAS, While Braille can be written by utilizing a stylus
22 tool to punch characters into heavy papers, advances in
23 technology have allowed for Braille typewriters and computer
24 attachments; and

25 WHEREAS, Additional advances in technology have brought about
26 alternative methods for blind and visually impaired persons to
27 read and write, yet Braille continues to be used and taught in
28 the United States; and

29 WHEREAS, There are approximately 1.3 million legally blind
30 citizens in the United States; and

1 WHEREAS, Research estimates that 40% of all blind individuals
2 in the United States can use Braille and that only 32% of all
3 blind individuals are employed; and

4 WHEREAS, Statistics show that the ability to read Braille
5 provides a clear advantage in employment and self-sufficiency of
6 blind individuals, as 85% of the number of blind persons who can
7 read Braille are employed; and

8 WHEREAS, Blind children who learn to use Braille often excel
9 in schools, many alongside sighted children, and possess the
10 ability to gain employment and live independently; and

11 WHEREAS, Approximately 5,500 legally blind children in the
12 United States read Braille today; and

13 WHEREAS, Braille literacy has proven to aid blind children
14 and adults in maintaining autonomous roles in our communities;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Braille literacy continues to empower blind
17 individuals to develop living skills and advance academically,
18 creatively, socially and economically; therefore be it

19 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives support the
20 teaching and use of Braille and designate May 22, 2007, as
21 "Braille Literacy Awareness Day" in Pennsylvania.