

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 292 Session of 2015

INTRODUCED BY BAKER, THOMAS, CALTAGIRONE, QUIGLEY, DIGIROLAMO, MILLARD, CAUSER, BLOOM, MAJOR, PICKETT, HENNESSEY, D. COSTA, KIRKLAND, LONGIETTI, FARINA, SCHLEGEL CULVER, CUTLER, A. HARRIS, V. BROWN, READSHAW, HARHART, KAUFFMAN, WARD, MCGINNIS, GODSHALL, MAHONEY, BARRAR, JAMES, GIBBONS, PAYNE, MENTZER, WATSON, WHEELAND, GINGRICH, B. MILLER, BENNINGHOFF, GILLEN, MURT AND GABLER, APRIL 27, 2015

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, APRIL 27, 2015

A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the week of May 3 through 9, 2015, as "American
2 Religious History Week" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, Religious faith was not only important in official
4 American life during the periods of discovery, exploration,
5 colonization and growth, but has also been acknowledged and
6 incorporated into all three branches of the Federal Government
7 since the founding of our country; and

8 WHEREAS, The Supreme Court of the United States affirmed this
9 self-evident fact in a unanimous ruling declaring "This is a
10 religious people ... From the discovery of this continent to the
11 present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation";
12 and

13 WHEREAS, The first act of America's first Congress in 1774
14 was to ask a minister to open with prayer and to lead Congress
15 in the reading of four chapters of the Bible; and

1 WHEREAS, The Liberty Bell was named for the Biblical
2 inscription from Leviticus 25:10 emblazoned around it: "Proclaim
3 liberty throughout the land, to all the inhabitants thereof";
4 and

5 WHEREAS, In 1782, Congress pursued a plan to print a Bible
6 that would be "a neat edition of the Holy Scriptures for the use
7 of schools" and therefore approved the production of the first
8 English language Bible printed in America that contained the
9 congressional endorsement that "the United States in Congress
10 assembled ... recommend this edition of the Bible to the
11 inhabitants of the United States"; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1787, at the Constitutional Convention in
13 Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin declared, "God governs in the
14 affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground
15 without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise
16 without His aid? ... Without His concurring aid, we shall
17 succeed in this political building no better than the builders
18 of Babel"; and

19 WHEREAS, In 1853, the United States Senate declared that the
20 Founding Fathers "had no fear or jealousy of religion itself,
21 nor did they wish to see us an irreligious people ... they did
22 not intend to spread over all the public authorities and the
23 whole public action of the nation the dead and revolting
24 spectacle of atheistical apathy"; and

25 WHEREAS, Beginning in 1904 and continuing for the next half-
26 century, the Federal Government printed and distributed *The Life*
27 *and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* for the use of Members of
28 Congress because of the important teachings it contained; and

29 WHEREAS, The constitutions of each of the 50 states, either
30 in the preamble or body, explicitly recognize or express

1 gratitude to God; and

2 WHEREAS, President Andrew Jackson declared that the Bible "is
3 the rock on which our Republic rests"; and

4 WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln declared that the Bible
5 "is the best gift God has given to men ... But for it, we could
6 not know right from wrong"; and

7 WHEREAS, President Franklin D. Roosevelt not only led the
8 nation in a six-minute prayer during D-Day on June 6, 1944, but
9 he also declared, "If we will not prepare to give all that we
10 have and all that we are to preserve Christian civilization in
11 our land, we shall go to destruction"; and

12 WHEREAS, President John F. Kennedy declared, "The rights of
13 man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand
14 of God"; and

15 WHEREAS, Every other President has similarly recognized the
16 role of God and religious faith in the public life of America;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, All sessions of the United States Supreme Court
19 begin with the Court's Marshal announcing, "God save the United
20 States and this honorable court"; and

21 WHEREAS, Justice John Jay, an author of the Federalist Papers
22 and original Justice of the United States Supreme Court, urged,
23 "The most effectual means of securing the continuance of our
24 civil and religious liberties is always to remember with
25 reverence and gratitude the Source from which they flow"; and

26 WHEREAS, Many other important American government leaders,
27 institutions, monuments, buildings and landmarks both openly
28 acknowledge and incorporate religious words, symbols and imagery
29 into official venues; therefore be it

30 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the

1 week of May 3 through 9, 2015, as "American Religious History
2 Week" for the recognition of the impact of religious beliefs on
3 America's history; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives affirm the rich
5 spiritual and diverse religious history of our nation's founding
6 and subsequent history, including up to the current day; and be
7 it further

8 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives reject, in the
9 strongest possible terms, any effort to remove, obscure or
10 purposely omit such history from our nation's public buildings
11 and educational resources.