
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 1082 Session of
2018

INTRODUCED BY RABB, MURT, DRISCOLL, YOUNGBLOOD, KAVULICH,
SOLOMON, J. McNEILL, BERNSTINE, HILL-EVANS, KINSEY, GROVE,
MILLARD, CALTAGIRONE, ROEBUCK, WATSON, KIRKLAND, THOMAS,
FITZGERALD, BULLOCK, TAI, NEILSON AND DeLUCA, OCTOBER 1, 2018

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
OCTOBER 1, 2018

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing August 18, 2018, as the 500th anniversary of the
2 advent of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which has taken a
3 nearly incalculable human and societal toll.

4 WHEREAS, On August 18, 1518, King Charles I of Spain issued a
5 charter sanctioning the transportation of enslaved people direct
6 from Africa to the Americas; and

7 WHEREAS, At the direction of King Charles, the trans-Atlantic
8 slave trade was created as a direct and economically lucrative
9 route to the Americas, which fundamentally changed the nature
10 and scale of the human trafficking industry; and

11 WHEREAS, The trans-Atlantic slave trade was responsible for
12 the transportation of more than 10 million enslaved African
13 people across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas between the
14 16th and 19th centuries; and

15 WHEREAS, The murder and sexual abuse of the enslaved captives
16 was widespread, and well over one million women, men and
17 children died during the dehumanizing voyage; and

1 WHEREAS, Not only did the royal charter lead to the
2 kidnapping of millions of people and a lifetime of oppression,
3 pain and enduring trauma for enslaved laborers and their progeny
4 for generations, but it also led to the political and military
5 deterioration of large geographical areas of an entire
6 continent; and

7 WHEREAS, The Middle Passage, as the trans-Atlantic journey
8 would become known, was infamous for its horrors due to the
9 overcrowded, unsanitary and brutal conditions for its captive
10 passengers on cargo ships in which hundreds of Africans were
11 held below the ship decks during the 5,000-mile voyage; and

12 WHEREAS, The trans-Atlantic slave trade, known for its
13 unparalleled inhumanity, left a lasting legacy of deep poverty,
14 structural inequality and systemic racism that persist in the
15 United States and abroad; and

16 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania legislature passed the "Act for the
17 Gradual Abolition of Slavery" on March 1, 1780, the first
18 legislative enactment to end slavery in America; and

19 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Constitution declares that "all men
20 are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent
21 and indefeasible rights, among which are those of enjoying and
22 defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing and
23 protecting property and reputation, and of pursuing their own
24 happiness"; and

25 WHEREAS, While Pennsylvania was among the first colonies to
26 abolish slavery, the Commonwealth and many influential
27 Pennsylvanians, industries such as agriculture, manufacturing,
28 banking, finance, insurance, transportation and religious orders
29 significantly benefited directly and indirectly from enslaved
30 labor for decades after it was outlawed Statewide; and

1 WHEREAS, Faith, courage, resilience, resistance, collective
2 ingenuity and strength of character demonstrated by enslaved,
3 manumitted and fugitive Pennsylvanians and their descendants
4 remain an example for all people of the United States; therefore
5 be it

6 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize August
7 18, 2018, as the 500th anniversary of the advent of the trans-
8 Atlantic slave trade, which has taken a nearly incalculable
9 human and societal toll; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives remember those
11 that were sold into slavery 500 years ago and transported across
12 the Atlantic Ocean; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives never forget that
14 it is the Commonwealth's responsibility to protect the welfare
15 and well-being of all.