

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 214 Session of 2019

INTRODUCED BY FRANKEL, SOLOMON, TURZAI, STEPHENS, LONGIETTI, ULLMAN, STURLA, McCLINTON, MILLARD, FREEMAN, SANCHEZ, DONATUCCI, SCHLOSSBERG, LEE, DiGIROLAMO, KORTZ, DeLUCA, MARSHALL, MURT, COMITTA, KRUEGER, HILL-EVANS, FIEDLER, ZABEL, O'MARA, KINSEY, T. DAVIS, INNAMORATO, ROTHMAN, YOUNGBLOOD, RAVENSTAHL, SAMUELSON, CALTAGIRONE, WARREN, A. DAVIS, SAINATO, READSHAW, SAPPEY, NEILSON, ISAACSON, HOWARD, MULLINS, MARKOSEK, D. MILLER, HARRIS, MIZGORSKI, McCARTER, DUNBAR, SCHLEGEL CULVER, KULIK, SHUSTERMAN, PASHINSKI, RAPP, SCHWEYER, EVERETT, DERMODY, CAUSER, KIRKLAND, GOODMAN, TOEPEL, STRUZZI, SAYLOR, BULLOCK, KLUNK, THOMAS, PICKETT, JOHNSON-HARRELL, DRISCOLL, BRADFORD, FEE, BURNS, HAHN, ROZZI, KENYATTA, SNYDER, MATZIE, KAUFER, MADDEN, DeLISSIO, RADER, LAWRENCE, BIZZARRO, FLYNN, BARRAR, RABB, ROEBUCK, KIM, CARROLL, VITALI, FRITZ, BOYLE, HANBIDGE, BOBACK, HARKINS, CIRESI, CONKLIN, HELM, JONES, CRUZ, WEBSTER, DALEY, McNEILL, KOSIEROWSKI, SCHMITT, DAVIDSON, SIMS, DEASY, MULLERY, TOOHL, ORTITAY, BRIGGS, GAINNEY, B. MILLER, DAWKINS, OBERLANDER, NELSON, BURGOS, MALAGARI, OWLETT, O'NEAL, HOHENSTEIN, RIGBY, FITZGERALD, ECKER, MERSKI, EMRICK, MEHAFFIE, WHEATLEY, DELLOSO, GAYDOS, MACKENZIE, COOK AND DELOZIER, APRIL 10, 2019

INTRODUCED, APRIL 10, 2019

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

- 1 Designating April 10, 2019, as "Stronger Than Hate Day" in
- 2 Pennsylvania.
- 3 WHEREAS, On October 27, 2018, tragedy struck Pittsburgh's
- 4 Squirrel Hill neighborhood, which is home to a vibrant, diverse
- 5 and loving Jewish community; and
- 6 WHEREAS, Several different Jewish houses of worship,
- 7 including Orthodox, Reconstructionist, Conservative and Reform
- 8 have long been a part of the fabric of that community; and

1 WHEREAS, The Tree of Life synagogue building is home to three
2 congregations, Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha, New Light and Dor
3 Hadash, each with its own distinct voice and faithful community
4 of thinkers and worshipers; and

5 WHEREAS, The coexistence of disparate congregations in the
6 Tree of Life building offered a spiritual place for a diverse
7 population of Jews living in Squirrel Hill and Pittsburgh; and

8 WHEREAS, With the exception of New York City, Pittsburgh is
9 the last Jewish community in the United States in which the
10 majority of its members still reside within the city, largely
11 because of the still-flourishing cultural and religious life of
12 the Squirrel Hill neighborhood; and

13 WHEREAS, As the popularity of the Squirrel Hill neighborhood
14 has grown, it has become a community that enjoys ethnic and
15 religious diversity, both holding onto its Jewish identity and
16 history and celebrating the gifts that new populations bring;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, While the General Assembly must remember in sorrow
19 the tragedy of the loss of 11 souls, we should also celebrate
20 their lives, their contributions to their community and the
21 family and friends who loved them; and

22 WHEREAS, Joyce Fienberg, who was a retired researcher at the
23 University of Pittsburgh and a community volunteer, was known
24 for her willingness to pitch in and help anywhere that she saw a
25 need; and

26 WHEREAS, Dr. Richard Gottfried was known for his love of
27 golf, reading, running and fine wine, as well as providing free
28 dental care to refugees and immigrants; and

29 WHEREAS, Rose Mallinger, known as "Bubbie" by all of her
30 relatives, who worshiped at the Tree of Life Synagogue for more

1 than 60 years, was 97 years old and amazed all who encountered
2 her with her energy; and

3 WHEREAS, Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz was known for his bowties, his
4 laugh and for being a skilled and compassionate doctor whose
5 practice was a safe place for HIV patients in the early years of
6 the disease; and

7 WHEREAS, Cecil Rosenthal, described as the "honorary mayor of
8 Squirrel Hill," was known for his concern for others and his
9 love of swimming; and

10 WHEREAS, David Rosenthal was known for his strong work ethic
11 and his love of anything related to the police or fire
12 department, and while the Rosenthal brothers lived with
13 intellectual disabilities, that did not stop them from having
14 rich, full lives that brought joy to all who encountered them;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Bernice Simon, a former nurse, died along side the
17 love of her life, husband, Sylvan Simon, a veteran and a retired
18 accountant, and the two of them were known for their sweet,
19 funny banter with one another and their love of the symphony;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, Dan Stein, who was a salesman for a plumbing supply
22 company, a driver for a funeral home and a former substitute
23 teacher, was known for being quick to help others, unpretentious
24 and a great fundraiser for his congregation; and

25 WHEREAS, Melvin "Mel" Wax was an accountant who, after
26 retirement, made use of his unique abilities with numbers to
27 track Pittsburgh Pirates statistics and was known for his quick,
28 silly humor and his commitment to attending services every
29 single week; and

30 WHEREAS, Irving "Irv" Younger, who owned a realty company and

1 was a former high school baseball coach, was known for his
2 delight at becoming a grandfather and his willingness to help a
3 stranger; and

4 WHEREAS, On the morning of October 27, 2018, the victims
5 mentioned above and their fellow worshipers were beginning
6 services or setting up for their activities at the Tree of
7 Life*Or L'Simcha synagogue building; and

8 WHEREAS, A gunman entered these congregations and killed 11
9 residents of this Commonwealth in the largest deadly act of
10 anti-Semitism in United States history; and

11 WHEREAS, Daniel Leger and Andrea Wedner each suffered gunshot
12 wounds and survived; and

13 WHEREAS, Due to the courageous response by law enforcement,
14 first responders and local medical professionals, lives were
15 saved; and

16 WHEREAS, Officers Anthony Burke, Timothy Matson, Daniel Mead,
17 Tyler Pashel, John Persin and Michael Smidga were injured as
18 they attempted to stop the shooter; and

19 WHEREAS, The Jewish Community Center immediately made itself
20 the central contact point for families of victims and others
21 affected by the attack, creating a comfortable place for
22 devastated community members to access information and services
23 amidst the confusion; and

24 WHEREAS, Jewish Family and Community Services marshaled
25 mental health resources to provide the entire community with
26 counseling services, making therapists available for individuals
27 and dispatching mental health professionals to schools, medical
28 facilities, senior centers and more; and

29 WHEREAS, Just hours after the attack, thousands of
30 Pennsylvanians converged on the streets of Squirrel Hill and

1 individuals and groups across the world responded to this
2 tragedy to pray, mourn, demonstrate and support those in need;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, The American Jewish Committee responded to the
5 attack by asking Jews and non-Jews to "Show up for Shabbat," and
6 synagogues throughout the world welcomed in strangers of all
7 faiths to share their heartbreak and show solidarity against
8 anti-Semitism; and

9 WHEREAS, The Islamic Center of Pittsburgh, the broader Muslim
10 community and so many diverse communities throughout the region
11 reached out with compassion and wholehearted support in a way
12 that showed the world that acts of violence will only serve to
13 further unite faithful people across religions and traditions;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, In the painful aftermath of the attack, the singular
16 phrase that arose from the heartbroken city of Pittsburgh became
17 "Stronger Than Hate"; and

18 WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the first responders,
19 rabbis, staff, lay leadership and hundreds of members of these
20 synagogues who helped their family and friends; and

21 WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the doctors, nurses and
22 countless medical professionals who treated the injured; and

23 WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the rabbis and
24 volunteers of the two Chevrah Kadisha, or burial societies, that
25 sanctified the dead; and

26 WHEREAS, The General Assembly thanks the Jewish Federation of
27 Greater Pittsburgh, Jewish Community Center of Greater
28 Pittsburgh and Jewish Family and Community Services of
29 Pittsburgh and the countless volunteers and donors of every
30 faith and background in Squirrel Hill and around the world;

1 therefore be it

2 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly designate April 10, 2019,
3 as "Stronger Than Hate Day" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly honor the 11
5 Pennsylvanians who lost their lives and made significant
6 contributions to their communities; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly recognize the wounded,
8 the survivors and the family and friends who have personally and
9 intensely felt the senseless tragedy of these few minutes of
10 mass violence; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly stand against the violent
12 hatred shown toward fellow Pennsylvanians and others on the
13 basis of religion or targeted at those who seek to pray
14 peacefully in the house of worship of their choice; and be it
15 further

16 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
17 the congregations of Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha, New Light and Dor
18 Hadash and the families of Joyce Fienberg, Dr. Richard
19 Gottfried, Rose Mallinger, Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, Cecil and David
20 Rosenthal, Bernice and Sylvan Simon, Dan Stein, Melvin Wax and
21 Irving Younger.