

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 626 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY SIMS, KOSIEROWSKI, MERSKI, KINSEY, ISAACSON,
A. DAVIS, HILL-EVANS, MILLARD, BERNSTINE, ULLMAN, HENNESSEY,
CRUZ, RAVENSTAHL, OTTEN, DIGIROLAMO, YOUNGBLOOD, SCHLOSSBERG,
DAWKINS, FREEMAN, MURT, KORTZ, DONATUCCI, McNEILL, READSHAW,
SANCHEZ, DEASY, HOWARD, BIZZARRO AND WARREN, DECEMBER 9, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, DECEMBER 9, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing December 1, 2019, as "World AIDS Day" in
2 Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, The World Health Organization established "World
4 AIDS Day" in 1988 to bring attention to the devastating impact
5 of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and remember those who have lost their
6 lives to the disease; and

7 WHEREAS, "World AIDS Day" is an opportunity to unite
8 individuals, organizations and local agencies across the world
9 to increase awareness and education about HIV/AIDS prevention,
10 treatment and care; and

11 WHEREAS, There are more than 37 million people living with
12 HIV/AIDS across the world, and more than 25 million people have
13 died from the epidemic in the past decade; and

14 WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
15 estimates that 1.1 million people are living with HIV in the
16 United States, with one in seven unaware of their infection; and

1 WHEREAS, Populations at increased risk of HIV infection face
2 high levels of stigma due to their gender, sexual orientation,
3 gender identity, drug use or sex work; and

4 WHEREAS, Stigma toward people living with or at risk of HIV
5 discourages or delays the access of health care services,
6 including HIV prevention methods, HIV status testing, enrolling
7 in care and adhering to treatment; and

8 WHEREAS, In the United States, it is estimated that only 57%
9 of people living with HIV meet the national criteria for
10 continuous HIV medical care; and

11 WHEREAS, People living with HIV may not receive continuous
12 medical care for various reasons, including the cost of medical
13 care and HIV drugs, stigma, lack of stable housing and
14 transportation; and

15 WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and
16 Prevention, 90% of new HIV infections could be averted by
17 diagnosing people living with HIV and ensuring that they receive
18 prompt, ongoing care and treatment; and

19 WHEREAS, The World AIDS Campaign was launched in 1997 by
20 UNAIDS, the joint United Nations program on HIV/AIDS, with the
21 mission of raising public awareness of HIV/AIDS and promoting
22 nonjudgmental and nondiscriminatory access to HIV prevention,
23 treatment and care for all human beings; and

24 WHEREAS, For more than 20 years, UNAIDS has helped to
25 position, shape and scale up the response to HIV, encouraging
26 dialogue and bringing in communities that have been left out of
27 decision making; and

28 WHEREAS, The 2019 theme for "World AIDS Day" is "Ending the
29 HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Community by Community," signifying the
30 essential role of communities in taking a public health approach

1 to providing medical care and support services to individuals
2 with HIV/AIDS and aligning with UNAIDS's promotion of a HIV/AIDS
3 response that is driven and delivered by communities; and

4 WHEREAS, It is imperative that all levels of government
5 recognize the various barriers that exist to HIV/AIDS
6 prevention, testing and care and continue to make efforts to
7 combat stigma and discrimination in order to improve health
8 outcomes for people living with HIV; and

9 WHEREAS, New HIV diagnoses continue at far too high a level,
10 with 38,739 Americans diagnosed with HIV in 2017; and

11 WHEREAS, Although the estimated number of annual HIV
12 infections in the United States declined 9% between 2010 and
13 2016, HIV/AIDS continues to disproportionately affect various
14 populations and diagnoses are not evenly distributed across
15 states and regions; and

16 WHEREAS, As of 2017, Pennsylvania is ranked 9th highest in
17 the United States in cumulative reported HIV diagnoses, with the
18 percentage of new HIV cases being highest among those 20 to 29
19 years of age; and

20 WHEREAS, Every year on December 1 and throughout the month of
21 December, individuals and organizations across the world speak
22 out against the stigma and discrimination against individuals
23 with HIV/AIDS, and call for an increased response to move
24 forward to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic; therefore be it

25 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives remind the public
26 and government of the ongoing global challenges associated with
27 eradicating HIV and the essential role that communities have
28 played in the AIDS response at the international, national and
29 local levels; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives join other states

1 and countries around the world in recognizing December 1, 2019,
2 as "World AIDS Day" in an effort to increase awareness, provide
3 education about HIV/AIDS and demonstrate compassion for those
4 affected.