

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 727 Session of
2020

INTRODUCED BY RABB, KIM, T. DAVIS, MURT, JONES, SAMUELSON, HILL-
EVANS, BIZZARRO, KORTZ, MILLARD, HENNESSEY, SAINATO,
SCHLOSSBERG, McNEILL, BURNS, WARREN, FREEMAN, KINSEY,
LONGIETTI, HOWARD, WHEATLEY, NEILSON AND YOUNGBLOOD,
FEBRUARY 5, 2020

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, FEBRUARY 5, 2020

A RESOLUTION

1 Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the
2 Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

3 WHEREAS, This year marks the 150th anniversary of the
4 ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution of
5 the United States; and

6 WHEREAS, The Fifteenth Amendment, as part of the collective
7 package of Reconstruction Amendments which includes the
8 Thirteenth Amendment and Fourteenth Amendment, abolished
9 slavery, guaranteed equal protection of the laws and the right
10 to vote; and

11 WHEREAS, Congress proposed the Fifteenth Amendment to ensure
12 that the right of citizens to vote shall not be denied on
13 account of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude";
14 and

15 WHEREAS, On February 26, 1869, Congress passed the Fifteenth
16 Amendment; and

1 WHEREAS, On March 25, 1869, Pennsylvania was the 12th state
2 to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment; and

3 WHEREAS, After Iowa became the 28th state to ratify on
4 February 3, 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment was officially
5 certified to the Constitution of the United States; and

6 WHEREAS, The first legislative act abolishing slavery in the
7 United States was passed by the Pennsylvania General Assembly
8 with the passage of the Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery
9 on March 1, 1780; and

10 WHEREAS, In Pennsylvania, unlike many states, free African-
11 American men had the right to vote until 1838; and

12 WHEREAS, On January 20, 1838, during the Pennsylvania
13 Constitutional Convention, legislators amended the Constitution
14 of Pennsylvania to exclude African-American men by restricting
15 suffrage to white men by rewording the language to "white
16 freeman"; and

17 WHEREAS, It would not be until the ratification of the
18 Fifteenth Amendment that African-American men were again given
19 the right to vote in Pennsylvania; and

20 WHEREAS, The Fifteenth Amendment has served as a crucial
21 defense against systemic voter disenfranchisement in the United
22 States, preserving and protecting the rights of citizens of the
23 United States by allowing an opportunity to exercise a critical
24 role in a democratic republic; therefore be it

25 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives commemorate the
26 150th anniversary of the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment
27 to the Constitution of the United States.