
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 235 Session of
2022

INTRODUCED BY RABB, BULLOCK, LEE, SCHLOSSBERG, DELLOSO,
D. WILLIAMS, HOHENSTEIN, GUENST, MADDEN, HILL-EVANS,
INNAMORATO AND CIRESI, OCTOBER 17, 2022

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, OCTOBER 17, 2022

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and congratulating the Free African Society on the
2 235th anniversary of its founding in Philadelphia.

3 WHEREAS, On April 12, 1787, the Free African Society (FAS)
4 was founded by preachers Richard Allen and Absalom Jones and
5 other free Black men; and

6 WHEREAS, FAS was the first Black mutual aid society in
7 Philadelphia and one of the first such organizations for Black
8 Americans; and

9 WHEREAS, Among the founding members were Samuel Baston,
10 Joseph Johnson, Cato Freedman, Caesar Cranchell, James Potter
11 and William White; and

12 WHEREAS, Notable members included Black abolitionists such as
13 Cyrus Bustill, James Forten and William Gray; and

14 WHEREAS, The society was originally created to provide
15 fellowship, a place of worship and monetary support for members
16 and their families in the case of sickness or death; and

17 WHEREAS, The society played an important role during the

1 yellow fever epidemic of 1793 in Philadelphia, nursing the sick,
2 burying the deceased and transporting the ill to centers for
3 treatment; and

4 WHEREAS, FAS provided comfort and financial aid to the sick
5 after many White Philadelphians left the city, resulting in the
6 organization incurring debts that it could not pay back and
7 disbanding by late 1794; and

8 WHEREAS, FAS was revived and was responsible for establishing
9 the first independent Black churches in the United States,
10 including Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and the
11 African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas; and

12 WHEREAS, Today, the mission of FAS "is to create the
13 constituency and communion need for the Black African diaspora
14 in Philadelphia to independently advance their own education,
15 employment, entrepreneurship, enterprises, and estate across
16 fields, disciplines, and industries"; and

17 WHEREAS, The modern FAS continues to positively impact the
18 Black community in Philadelphia, by providing sponsorships,
19 mentorships, internships, apprenticeships and education; and

20 WHEREAS, FAS grounds its work "within the principles of
21 social innovation and community organizing to spark the change"
22 that it seeks across the globe; therefore be it

23 RESOLVED (the Senate concurring), That the General Assembly
24 recognize and congratulate the Free African Society on the 235th
25 anniversary of its founding in Philadelphia; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That the General Assembly applaud the society's
27 investment in bringing together people, skills and resources to
28 empower the infrastructure of Black industries, institutions and
29 Pennsylvanians.