

Request of Rep Mark Cohen

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35

A RESOLUTION

Designating the month of May 2012 as Jewish American Heritage Month in Pennsylvania

Whereas, on April 20, 2006, President George W. Bush proclaimed that May would be Jewish American Heritage Month. The announcement followed congressional resolutions introduced by Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida and Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania urging the president to proclaim a month that would recognize the more than 350-year history of Jewish contributions to American culture.

Whereas, President George Washington remembered the important Jewish contribution to the War for Independence when he wrote in a letter dated August 17, 1790: "May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in the land continue to merit and enjoy the goodwill of the other inhabitants. While everyone shall sit safely under his own vine and fig-tree and there shall be none to make him afraid." Pennsylvania, Delaware, South Carolina, and Georgia were first to eliminate barriers to voting and holding office for Jewish citizens as did passage of the Bill of Rights in 1791.

Whereas, there have been successive waves of Jewish emigration from Germany in the 19th century, from Eastern European Jews in 1880–1914 escaping anti-Jewish "pogroms", Holocaust survivors from Europe after World War II, and most recently a wave of emigration from the Soviet Union after 1970— all of which brought waves of talent, drive, industry and culture to enrich American life.

The Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission have joined in the 2012 efforts to pay tribute to the generations of Jewish Americans who have helped form the fabric of American history, culture and society. Recourses for the celebration from these organizations can be found at www.jewishheritagemonth.gov

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the month of May 2012 as " Jewish American Heritage Month " in Pennsylvania and encourage participation in national, State and local observances celebrating the contributions of Jewish Americans to life in the United States.