



MAY 15 2012

Senate of Pennsylvania

May 15, 2012

TO: ALL SENATORS

FROM: Stewart J. Greenleaf

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stewart".

SUBJECT: Cosponsorship – **William Penn Day**

I plan to offer a resolution designating September 29, 2012 as William Penn Day in Pennsylvania.

William Penn, the founder of this Commonwealth, was born in London, England, on October 24, 1644. The Province of Pennsylvania was acquired by William Penn from King Charles II of England, in payment of a debt the king owed his father, Admiral Sir William Penn, for which William Penn received a charter from King Charles II, dated March 4, 1681.

William Penn invited peoples of diverse nationalities and creeds to join with him in a "Holy Experiment" where men might worship God according to their own light. His own prayers were that Pennsylvania might become "the seed of a Nation". William Penn had strong faith in a representative form of government, public education without regard to race, creed, sex or ability to pay and respect for the civil liberties of all persons. Many of the liberties and rights that we enjoy today can be traced to William Penn's efforts.

William Penn initiated the first call for a "united states" in his 1697 "A Plan for Union for the English Colonies in America". William Penn also developed the first practical plan for world peace and a "united nations" in 1693, which was 251 years before the United Nations was established. Further, William Penn established the first constitutions including religious liberty and tolerance, self-government and taxation only through representation, in modern history.

On October 28, 1701, Penn's third revision to Pennsylvania's Constitution was adopted, "Charter of Privileges". The "Charter of Privileges" so firmly established and grounded Pennsylvania as a keystone to the other colonies that it evolved into the outline and later adoption of our American liberties, the Constitution of the United States. In 1751 the General Assembly commissioned a foundry in England to forge a bell to properly commemorate and celebrate the 50th anniversary of Penn's "Charter of Privileges". On the bell were inscribed the prophetic words from Leviticus 25:10, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof". Today that bell, the Liberty Bell, is celebrated as one of America's most famous symbols of American Independence.

The Liberty Bell, fondly associated with the year 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was read in Philadelphia, was actually created 25 years previous to the revolution in honor of William Penn and his great "Charter of Privileges" of 1701. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were adopted in Philadelphia, and this Nation was there established. Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States and writer of the Declaration of Independence, duly recognized William Penn's indelible influence upon this American nation and stated that he was, without doubt, "the greatest lawgiver the world has produced". Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States, stated that, in speaking of the phenomenon in Pennsylvania, "America did not come out of New England".

If you are interested in cosponsoring this resolution, please contact Pat Snively of my office by e-mailing her at psnively@pasen.gov.