

A RESOLUTION

1 Honoring the Coptic Christians martyred as they stood for their
2 faith and eliciting solidarity in the wake of the killings.

3 WHEREAS, In Christianity, a person is considered a martyr if
4 killed for one's faith; and

5 WHEREAS, Egypt's Coptic Christians are among many recent
6 martyrs; and

7 WHEREAS, The Copts trace their history to Alexandria during
8 the apostolic age; and

9 WHEREAS, Over the centuries, they have held variable
10 political and economic power in the Middle East; and

11 WHEREAS, Now a religious minority in Egypt, Coptic Christians
12 constitute the largest single group of foreign workers in
13 neighboring Libya; and

14 WHEREAS, Extremists have targeted Copts in Libya solely
15 because of their faith; and

16 WHEREAS, In incidents leading to the Copts' captivity,
17 militants separated the Christians from the Muslims living in a

1 housing compound in the central Libyan city of Sirte; and

2 WHEREAS, Islamic State released a video in February 2015,
3 showing mass killings of captive Egyptian Coptic Christians by
4 beheading; and

5 WHEREAS, In their last moments, the 21 Egyptian Coptic
6 Christians were forced to kneel on a Libyan beach; and

7 WHEREAS, Some of the men can be heard professing their
8 embrace of Christianity; and

9 WHEREAS, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi declared a
10 seven-day mourning period in his country; and

11 WHEREAS, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Church
12 has acclaimed the men as martyrs, having died for their faith;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, His Holiness Pope Francis of the Roman Catholic
15 Church has publicly referred to the men as martyrs, hailing
16 their confessed Christianity and denouncing their murder; and

17 WHEREAS, One week after their execution, the men were
18 recognized as the 21 Coptic martyrs of Libya when their names
19 were entered into the Coptic Synaxarium; and

20 WHEREAS, The martyrdom of these canonized men is thus
21 commemorated annually as part of the Coptic Orthodox Church
22 calendar; and

23 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of
24 Pennsylvania mourns and respects these 21 expatriate workers who
25 were persecuted and who died for their faith; therefore be it

26 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives honor the Coptic
27 Christians martyred as they stood for their faith and elicit
28 solidarity in the wake of the killings; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to
30 His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria, Patriarch of

- 1 the See of St. Mark, at St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral,
- 2 Abbassia District, Cairo, Egypt.