

## A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and honoring firefighters throughout this  
2 Commonwealth for their bravery, dedication and heroism and  
3 designating May 4, 2016, as "Firefighters' Day" in  
4 Pennsylvania.

5 WHEREAS, In 1736, Benjamin Franklin founded the first  
6 volunteer fire company, Union Fire Company, in Philadelphia,  
7 making Pennsylvania the birthplace of the volunteer fire service  
8 in North America; and

9 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has approximately 2,400 fire companies,  
10 which amounts to the largest number of fire departments  
11 nationally; and

12 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania serves as a national leader in the  
13 number of career and paid personnel providing emergency  
14 services; and

15 WHEREAS, In this Commonwealth, volunteers staff 95% of all  
16 fire companies with more than 50,000 volunteers, representing  
17 the largest number of volunteer firefighters in the nation; and

18 WHEREAS, On average, 10 Pennsylvania firefighters die in the

1 line of duty every year; and

2 WHEREAS, Firefighters perform selfless tasks quietly and  
3 often without the recognition they deserve, risking their lives  
4 daily to protect the lives and property of the residents of this  
5 Commonwealth; and

6 WHEREAS, Changes in society and in the environment have  
7 increased the dangers these individuals face daily in the  
8 performance of their duties as protectors of the residents and  
9 property of this Commonwealth; and

10 WHEREAS, The increased threat of terrorism, illicit drug labs  
11 and hazardous material incidents have placed firefighters in  
12 greater danger than ever before in the history of firefighting;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Although Pennsylvania has always depended heavily on  
15 its firefighters, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001,  
16 and the heightened awareness of future threats have only  
17 increased their important role as first responders; and

18 WHEREAS, The time that firefighters devote to protecting the  
19 lives and property of the residents of this Commonwealth  
20 represents time taken away from their family members; and

21 WHEREAS, May 4 annually serves as "International  
22 Firefighters' Day," a worldwide celebration that started in 1999  
23 in Australia when a firefighter named J.J. Edmondson, in  
24 reaction to a tragic wildfire that claimed the lives of five  
25 firefighters, sent an e-mail to his colleagues calling for an  
26 international holiday to honor the sacrifices and triumphs of  
27 firefighters everywhere; and

28 WHEREAS, Since that time, "International Firefighters' Day"  
29 has grown to become a date in which the world's community can  
30 stand together to recognize and honor sacrifices made by all

1 firefighters in their efforts to guarantee safety within their  
2 communities; and

3 WHEREAS, "International Firefighters' Day" serves as a time  
4 to thank current and past firefighters for their contributions  
5 and to remember those men and women who have made the ultimate  
6 sacrifice to save and protect lives in their neighborhoods;  
7 therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives recognize and  
9 honor the bravery and sacrifice of firefighters in this  
10 Commonwealth, extend thanks for their service and, on the  
11 occasion of "International Firefighters' Day," designate May 4,  
12 2016, as "Firefighters' Day" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge all members  
14 of the General Assembly and elected officials and residents  
15 across this Commonwealth to make efforts to honor and remember  
16 firefighters in Pennsylvania for their dedication, service and  
17 sacrifice, including the giving of their lives, in order to  
18 protect the lives and property of the residents of this  
19 Commonwealth; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That such efforts may include wearing and  
21 displaying blue and red ribbons pinned together, participating  
22 in a memorial or recognition event, rising together in a public  
23 meeting or gathering in honor of the sacrifices of firefighters  
24 or by pausing for a minute at noon on the first Sunday in May as  
25 a sign of gratitude for their service.