

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## HOUSE BILL

No. 2

Session of  
1985

INTRODUCED BY IRVIS, RYAN AND CARN, JANUARY 23, 1985

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, FEBRUARY 25, 1985

## AN ACT

1 To provide for the establishment of a Commonwealth Commission on  
2 the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution; and  
3 making an appropriation.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Findings.

7 The General Assembly finds that:

8 (1) The Bicentennial of the Constitutional Convention's  
9 adoption of the Constitution at the Pennsylvania State House,  
10 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, occurs on September 17, 1987; the  
11 Bicentennial of the Pennsylvania ratification of the  
12 Constitution occurs on December 12, 1987; and the  
13 Bicentennial of the national adoption of the Constitution, by  
14 ratification of states, occurs on June 21, 1988.

15 (2) The anniversary dates of the national ratification  
16 of the United States Constitution's Thirteenth, Fourteenth,  
17 Fifteenth and Nineteenth Amendments abolishing slavery,

1 preventing abridgment of citizenship rights, guaranteeing  
2 equal rights for all, regardless of race, color or previous  
3 condition of servitude, and the granting of suffrage to women  
4 should be appropriately observed during the Bicentennial of  
5 the United States Constitution.

6 (3) The Constitution enunciates the limitations on  
7 government, the inalienable citizen rights and the timeless  
8 principles of individual liberty and responsibility and  
9 equality before law, for the people of the United States of  
10 America.

11 (4) This document has set an enduring example of  
12 representative democracy for the world.

13 (5) The maintenance of the common principles that  
14 animate and govern our Republic depend upon a knowledge and  
15 understanding of their roots and origins.

16 (6) The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, since its birth,  
17 attended by William Penn's prayer that it would become the  
18 "seed of a Nation," earned, through peace and war, the role  
19 of gracious and learned host for the Constitutional  
20 Convention of 1787.

21 (7) Pennsylvania's people, communities and Commonwealth  
22 government provided America with debate, study,  
23 experimentation, leadership and strength indispensable to the  
24 formation of the Republic in the process of the convention  
25 adoption of the Constitution on September 17, 1787, the  
26 issuance of a State House call for a convention to consider  
27 ratification and the Commonwealth ratification of the United  
28 States Constitution on December 12, 1787; and

29 (8) It is the privilege and duty of every Pennsylvanian  
30 to join in a Commonwealth and national observance of the

Bicentennial of the United States Constitution with pride,  
dedication and love of heritage.

Section 2. Commission; membership.

(a) Establishment of commission.--There is hereby  
established the Commonwealth Commission on the Bicentennial of  
the United States Constitution, hereinafter referred to as the  
commission, to promote and coordinate activities to commemorate  
the Bicentennial of the Constitution.

(b) Composition.--The commission shall be composed of 30  
members as follows:

(1) Twenty members appointed by the Governor; four of  
whom shall be appointed from among the recommendations made  
by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, in  
consultation with the Majority and Minority Leaders of the  
House of Representatives; four of whom shall be appointed  
from among the recommendations made by the President pro  
tempore of the Senate, in consultation with the Majority  
Leader and Minority Leader of the Senate; and four of whom  
shall be appointed from recommendations by the Chief Justice  
of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, in consultation with  
the President Judges of the Commonwealth and Superior Courts.

(2) The Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the  
Commonwealth, or their designees.

(3) The President pro tempore of the Senate, or his  
designee.

(4) The Speaker of the House of Representatives, or his  
designee.

(5) The Secretary of the Department of Education, or his  
designee.

(6) The Chairman of the Pennsylvania Historical and

1 Museum Commission, or his designee.

2 (7) The chairmen of the majority and minority  
3 Pennsylvania delegations in the United States House of  
4 Representatives, or their designees.

5 (8) The United States Senators of the Commonwealth of  
6 Pennsylvania, or their designees.

7 (c) Honorary members.--The President of the United States,  
8 the Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the  
9 United States House of Representatives, the President pro  
10 tempore of the United States Senate and the Chief Justice of the  
11 United States Supreme Court shall be invited to serve as  
12 distinguished honorary members of the commission.

13 (d) Membership to be balanced.--Each of the individuals  
14 making recommendations to the Governor regarding appointments  
15 shall seek to achieve a balanced membership representing, to the  
16 maximum extent practicable, the Commonwealth as a whole. The  
17 commission members shall be chosen from among individuals who  
18 have demonstrated allegiance to civic duty, strong sense of  
19 public service, expertise in the learned professions and  
20 abilities likely to contribute to the fulfillment of the duties  
21 of the commission.

22 (e) Term of members.--Members of the commission shall be  
23 appointed for the life of the commission.

24 (f) Chairman.--One of the members shall be appointed as  
25 chairman, subject to approval of the majority of the commission,  
26 by the Governor.

27 (g) Quorum.--Sixteen members of the commission shall  
28 constitute a quorum. Membership attendance shall be made a part  
29 of the record of the commission.

30 (h) Vacancies.--A vacancy in the commission resulting from

1 the death or resignation of a member shall not affect its powers  
2 and shall be filled in the same manner in which the original  
3 appointment was made.

4 (i) Members not to be compensated.--Members of the  
5 commission shall receive no compensation for their services, but  
6 shall be reimbursed for travel and other reasonable expenses  
7 incurred by them in the performance of their duties.

8 Section 3. Administrative provisions and powers.

9 (a) Assistance from Department of Education.--The Department  
10 of Education shall provide such secretarial ~~and other staff~~ <—  
11 assistance as may be necessary to the proper functioning of the  
12 commission, consistent with the laws of the Commonwealth.

13 (b) Commission to coordinate activities.--The commission  
14 shall coordinate, generally, activities throughout all of the  
15 Commonwealth and serve as a clearinghouse for the collection and  
16 dissemination of information about bicentennial events and  
17 plans.

18 (c) Planning and implementation of activities.--In planning  
19 and implementing appropriate activities to commemorate the  
20 bicentennial, the commission shall give due consideration to:

21 (1) The historical Pennsylvania State House setting in  
22 which the Constitution was developed and ratified and the  
23 ratification debates in the Pennsylvania State House of  
24 Representatives and the State Convention of Ratification.

25 (2) The contribution of diverse ethnic, religious and  
26 racial groups.

27 (3) The relationship and historical development of the  
28 three branches of the government.

29 (4) The unique achievements and contributions of the  
30 Pennsylvania participants in the Constitutional Convention of

1 1787.

2 (5) The diverse legal and philosophical views regarding  
3 the Constitution.

4 (6) The need for reflection upon both academic and  
5 scholarly views of the Constitution and the principle that  
6 the document must be understood by the general public.

7 (7) The substantive provisions of the Constitution  
8 itself.

9 (8) The impact of the Constitution on American life and  
10 government.

11 (9) The need to encourage appropriate educational  
12 curriculums designed to educate students at all levels of  
13 learning on the drafting, ratification and history of the  
14 Constitution and the specific provisions of that document.

15 (10) The significance of the principles and institutions  
16 of the Constitution to other nations and their citizens.

17 (d) Commission to seek cooperation.--The commission shall  
18 seek the cooperation, advice and assistance of both private and  
19 governmental agencies, organizations and institutions.

20 Section 4. Powers and duties of commission.

21 The commission shall have the power and its duty shall be:

22 (1) To plan and develop activities appropriate to  
23 commemorate the Bicentennial of the Constitution, including a  
24 limited number of projects to be undertaken by the  
25 Commonwealth seeking to harmonize and balance the important  
26 goals of ceremony and celebration with the equally important  
27 goals of scholarship and education.

28 (2) To encourage private organizations, county and  
29 municipal governments and educational systems to organize and  
30 participate in bicentennial activities commemorating or

1 examining the drafting, ratification and history of the  
2 Constitution and the specific features of the document.

3 (3) To extend cooperation to all bicentennial agencies  
4 or commissions established by the United States Congress and  
5 the legislatures of all states. In doing so, it shall be the  
6 policy of the commission to provide equal treatment to all  
7 states, regardless of their date of establishment, in  
8 recognition of the historic role of Pennsylvania as a source  
9 of pioneers, culture, philosophy and system of self-  
10 government.

11 (4) To enter into contracts and to execute all  
12 instruments necessary or convenient for carrying on its  
13 operations.

14 (5) To accept, on behalf of the Commonwealth, gifts,  
15 donations, legacies and usages of money from individuals,  
16 organizations, public or private corporations and other  
17 similar entities.

18 (6) To solicit and raise moneys from public and private  
19 sources through the sale of commemorative medals and other  
20 items of a similar nature which promote the Bicentennial of  
21 the Constitution.

## 22 Section 5. Report.

23 On February 1, 1986, the commission shall submit, to the  
24 Governor and each house of the General Assembly, a comprehensive  
25 report incorporating specific recommendations of the commission  
26 for commemoration and coordination of the bicentennial and  
27 related activities. This report shall be accompanied by a  
28 summarization of all bicentennial projects proposed by persons,  
29 organizations and institutions of the private sector which  
30 contemplate no Federal or State financial subsidization, and

1 which are filed with the commission by the close of business on  
2 December 31, 1985.

3 Section 6. Termination.

4 The commission shall terminate on December 31, 1988.

5 Section 7. Appropriation.

6 There is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education,  
7 to assist in the work of the commission, the sum of \$50,000, or  
8 as much thereof as may be necessary, to carry out the provisions  
9 of this act. In addition, all moneys received from any other  
10 sources as contributions to this program shall be paid into the  
11 General Fund and credited to this appropriation. Funds  
12 unencumbered and unexpended as of June 30, 1989, shall lapse  
13 into the General Fund.

14 Section 8. Effective date.

15 This act shall take effect immediately.