

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 508 Session of
2000

INTRODUCED BY KENNEY AND J. TAYLOR, MAY 16, 2000

INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,
MAY 16, 2000

A RESOLUTION

1 Memorializing the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee of the
2 United States Postal Service to consider and recommend to the
3 United States Postal Service Board of Governors issuance of a
4 commemorative stamp marking the 200th anniversary of the
5 death of Commodore John Barry in 2003.

6 WHEREAS, Commodore John Barry was born at Ballysampson in
7 Tachumshin Parish, County Wexford, Ireland, in 1745 and
8 immigrated to Philadelphia at the age of 15, finding employment
9 with a shipping firm where he prospered and became master of
10 several merchant vessels; and

11 WHEREAS, John Barry's first command came in 1766 aboard the
12 schooner "Barbadoes," sailing out of Philadelphia, which he
13 adopted as his home port; and

14 WHEREAS, At the outbreak of the American Revolution, John
15 Barry, like many of his fellow Irish-Americans who constituted
16 nearly 40% of the Continental forces, joined the battle for
17 American independence; and

18 WHEREAS, Upon the outbreak of war the Continental Congress
19 commissioned John Barry as Captain of the ship "Lexington,"

1 which on April 7, 1776, captured the British sloop "Edward," the
2 first war prize taken by the Americans; and

3 WHEREAS, On December 24, 1776, with his fleet unable to reach
4 open water, John Barry left his ships behind to recruit a
5 company of volunteers with whom he rushed to the aid of General
6 George Washington on the banks of the Delaware River and
7 participated in the American victories at Princeton and Trenton;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, During the course of the American Revolution, John
10 Barry boldly and skillfully engaged and captured many British
11 vessels and was wounded in service to his county; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1781 the Catholic Citizens of France sent to the
13 Americans the sum of \$6 million, entrusting the safe transport
14 of those vital funds as well as clothing and munitions to John
15 Barry aboard his ship "Resolute," which he successfully
16 delivered, enabling General Washington to sustain his army
17 through the critical showdown at Yorktown; and

18 WHEREAS, On March 10, 1783, John Barry, commanding the
19 "Alliance," won the last sea battle of the Revolution when,
20 while escorting a shipment of vital funds, he engaged and
21 avoided capture by the British ship "Sybille"; and

22 WHEREAS, John Barry was instrumental in the effort to
23 persuade the Pennsylvania General Assembly to ratify the
24 Constitution of the United States, providing observers with a
25 compelling example of persuasive lobbying; and

26 WHEREAS, After the American Revolution and the dissolution of
27 the Continental Navy, John Barry reentered the maritime trade,
28 helping to open commerce with China and the Orient; and

29 WHEREAS, John Barry was socially active as a member of the
30 Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, the Hibernian Fire Company, the

1 Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Order of the Cincinnati, the
2 military brotherhood of officers of the Continental Army, Navy
3 and Marines; and

4 WHEREAS, Under President Washington's guidance the Navy was
5 revived as a permanent entity, and on February 22, 1797,
6 President Washington conferred Commission Number One in the Navy
7 upon John Barry, designating him Commanding Officer of the
8 United States Navy with the rank of Commodore, the first in the
9 United States Navy; and

10 WHEREAS, Commodore John Barry is generally recognized as the
11 Father of the United States Navy, a title bestowed upon him by
12 his contemporaries; and

13 WHEREAS, Commodore John Barry's last day of active duty came
14 on March 6, 1801, and he remained head of the Navy until his
15 death on September 12, 1803; and

16 WHEREAS, Commodore John Barry was given a full military
17 burial in Philadelphia's Old St. Mary's Churchyard; and

18 WHEREAS, The death of Commodore John Barry was mourned by the
19 entire nation, and monuments honoring him have subsequently been
20 raised in Philadelphia, Washington D.C., New York, Boston and
21 Wexford, Ireland; therefore be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
23 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recognize the significance of the
24 legacy of Commodore John Barry and his monumental role in the
25 American Revolution that allowed this nation to be founded on
26 the principles of freedom and opportunity for all people; and be
27 it further

28 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
29 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorialize the Citizens' Stamp
30 Advisory Committee of the United States Postal Service to issue

1 a commemorative postage stamp honoring Commodore John Barry on
2 the 200th anniversary of his death during the year 2003; and be
3 it further

4 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to
5 the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee of the United States
6 Postal Service.